

Femme Mirror

Summer 1990





The Femme Mirror



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Our Cover Girl

You're right! It's ME, Jeanette
your greatly adored editor.
(Rather self serving, eh?)

(Really, if I'd had a suitable photo submitted of one of you, I'd have preferred running it! Send us some good quality black and white portraits! Obviously, quality of the print is more important than the look. See this cover for proof of my point.....)

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Dear Sisters:

Life is rather routine here in the Tri-Ess office. Lots of letters to answer and lots of mail to send out. Paperwork — paperwork!

There is something that I wanted especially to tell you about. It seems that we received our first letter from the Soviet Union. I sent a brochure to this person and I hope that we might get a new member from that vast country. The interesting thing was that the letter was addressed to: Heterosexual Crossdressers Join. That's what it read. The person's name was Oleg and he lives in Vladivostok. There were letters in the Russian alphabet on the front and back of the envelope, although the typing was in the alphabet that we know. On the front of the envelope there was also a picture of an airplane flying through clouds, with a sun in the background. Do you think we'll ever have a chapter in Vladivostok?

No doubt most of you have received the brochure that we send out to interested persons. This brochure was written by Ruth-Ann in Wisconsin in 1978 or 1979 and it has served us very well. It is professional and reflects many many hours of work. Ruth-Ann was a university student when the brochure was written.

Some people believe that we should update the brochure or at least make some changes reflecting new thoughts, etc., concerning crossdressing and Tri-Ess. I talked this over with Jane, our Board of Directors Chairwoman, and we decided that we should invite all members of Tri-Ess to work on a new revised brochure. I especially hope that Ruth-Ann works at this new project. But you gals who have nice ways of expressing yourselves should tackle this and see what you can come up with. I guarantee you that the job won't be a snap. It takes a lot of planning and thought, but I hope that you, who participate, will benefit by way of a new brochure. If you are a serious sister and capable of doing the job and need a copy of the brochure, please write for a copy. I'll be glad to send it on to you. It is important that we put our best foot forward when sending out a brochure describing the sorority and crossdressing in general. It should be professional and be "helping" to the reader.



CAROL BEECROFT

The quality of the work will reflect on the quality of the organization which sends out the brochure. So let's get started on this, gals. You who are motivated to work on the new brochure might drop me a line, indicating your interest in this important project.

A problem has arisen from time to time. An example is the new member who inquires about a local chapter. We contact the chapter leader and ask that she contact this member who wishes to visit the chapter. Nothing happens! The person writes again and we, again, write to the chapter leader, asking that she contact the interested person. Still nothing happens! Maybe the member gives up or the chapter leader finally contacts the member. But there should be more attention paid by chapter leaders who get requests for contacts by new members. I received a call from a sister on the east coast who had asked Marlene (Director of Chapter Development) to contact a local chapter leader and gave us her address, etc. I just had a call from that person because she had not been contacted. She is very desirous of attending a chapter meeting and meeting new people like herself. I ask chapter leaders to be more responsible and get to those new members when they ask for contact. In addition, chapters are asked to supply us with names of new chapter leaders. It seems that leadership in our chapters often changes hands and we need the correct names of chapter leaders so that we can contact the right person when something like the above comes up. The National office would appreciate your assistance in this matter. We wonder if it wouldn't be a good idea if we had the phone number of each leader so that we could contact such leaders immediately if the necessity should arise.

I will be visiting various chapters from now on and I will be in Houston in July, visiting the sisters of Tau Chi Chapter. In August I will be in Albuquerque, visiting the girls at Phi Chapter. Diane from Alpha Zeta and I have discussed my attendance at one of their gatherings. I want to see you gals at your chapter meetings and plan to attend as many meetings as possible over the next year.

Jeanette Johnson

Don't Let The Pressure Get To You

Lee Trevino was once asked what it felt like to stand over a putt knowing if he made it he would win \$100,000.00. Concerning the pressure, Trevino responded "It feels great! If I miss the putt I still win \$65,000.00. Pressure is standing over a 10 foot downhill putt for \$50.00, your opponent is bigger than you, doesn't want your clubs, and you only have \$5.00 in your pocket."



In some respects, I am like Trevino (attitude only—definitely not ability). I love to play golf when there is pressure involved. I normally play much better in an important tournament. I have learned to use pressure to accentuate my performance. When the heat is on, I tend to concentrate better which translates to better scores. Many of my opponents allow the pressure to altar their swings which translates to worse scores. All of this translates: the person who doesn't choke under pressure will normally come out the winner.

I believe there are three kinds of pressure: situational, internal, and external. Trying to negotiate a long iron shot over a lake to a small green is a situational pressure. Internal pressure tells me I should be able to execute the shot because I have done it before and should be able to do it again. External pressure is your golfing partner threatening to break a club over my head if I dump the shot in the lake. The first two types make me play better. I am no fan of the third type.

Oh, My! I forgot this isn't an article for "Golf Digest" so I had better find a way to relate this to crossdressing.

Many of our members are feeling pressure to conform to some ideal of the perfect crossdresser. When they are unable to match these ideals they feel frustrated and alone and afraid they will never qualify for the coveted "Black Garter of Honor".

Due to a sense of pressure to conform to this ideal, our young heroine begins a journey fraught with

more pressure and potential pitfalls. She was once content with a hairy body, but to improve: shaving leads to plucking which leads to electrolysis. Toilet tissue leads to foam pads which leads to expensive silicon forms which leads to Premarin, and suddenly she can sell her unneeded silicon forms.

Where once she was content to dress alone on occasion, she now feels she must venture out. At her local chapter meetings she hears marvelous stories of her sisters venturing out into the world at large. They tell spellbinding stories of trips to the malls and of their uncanny ability to pass. They proudly display their "Black Garter of Honor". She reasons, "If I am to ever receive this award, I must go forth and pass."

She hears of others who proudly let everyone know that they are a crossdresser. "Sure," they say, "there can be problems but anyone who can't accept this aspect of your life never really cared for you". She suspects her family and some of her friends will be unable to understand her needs but she knows her growth as a crossdresser is dependent upon her being up front and bold with others. "After all," she is told "if they can't accept you as you are, it's their problem."

Wanting to be "the best she can be" she chooses the risk of losing her health, her family, her friends, her employment, and her standing in the community. She is willing to risk all of this because she desperately wants the acceptance and respect of her fellow crossdressers. She grows to covet the "Black Garter of Honor".

As editor of *The Femme Mirror*, my duties are varied. I sometimes feel like a farmer when a hard freeze is predicted. His major responsibility is to protect the tenderest of plants while trusting that the stronger, more mature plants can survive on their own. Recently, I have felt like I am neglecting the young tender plants.

Crossdressers have been labeled as "sick" or "perverted" by the some members of the medical profession and by society at large for so long, we (crossdressers in general and *The Femme Mirror* in particular) have taken what I feel is an unconscious hard-line position. We have taken a position that everything about crossdressing is wonderful. This position shows our disdain for those who feel everything about our chosen lifestyle is horrible. The truth lies between these two positions.

Some crossdressers are mentally "a few bricks short of a load". Then again, so are some members of the Elks, the Kiwanas, the N.R.A., and the United States House of Representatives, to say nothing of the U. S. Senate. They are not sick because of what they are but who they are. In any large group there will be persons of great intelligence, great compassion, as well as those who are a little dim and totally selfish.

However, when we only show the best side of crossdressing, without any of the problems, we lead some members of Tri Ess to question their own self-worth. We risk causing people to take unnecessary and foolish chances in order to reduce the pressure for conformity we unknowingly place on them.

The last thing in the world I wish to do is to infer crossdressing is of minor importance. Nor am I suggesting none of us should be concerned about growing. I am sold on Tri Ess. I didn't join our organization as a second choice when I couldn't get accepted in the "Royal and Mystic Order of the Mongoose". Rather I joined Tri Ess because it met needs in my life no other organization could meet.

The problem develops when we assume every member has exactly the same needs as do we. One member might really want to lose 30 pounds so she can fit into a size 12 dress. If she decided this of her own volition because, she wanted it for her own gratification and fulfillment, then I say, go for it, girl. If this same person decides to pluck her eyebrows, shave her arms and legs, and pierce her ears, she has every right to do so. These acts are important to her to help enhance her own feminine self image.

Then we have member number #2. She also has needs. She has joined Tri Ess in hopes of learning more about herself. She has needs for the fun and social interaction among others with same or similar needs. This member, although fantasizing to some degree of being a femme fatale, realizes that his life will necessarily limit some of the things he wishes he could do to enhance her beauty. Perhaps his spouse is unaware of his crossdressing and he is unwilling to shave his body hair so as to not create problems at home. Maybe he works outside in the heat and covering shaved arms and legs with long sleeves and pants would be more of a hassle than he wants. He may also realize at 6'5" and 235 pounds; with a five o'clock shadow by nine in the morning, there is no style of clothes, shade of foundation, or wig style sufficiently clever to make even the most casual of observers believe he is a woman.

Many choices we make in life come with a price tag. Member #1's choice to be a size 12 will mean severely limiting her caloric intake. It might mean not being able to go with friends to the beach for fear of the hassle of explaining where "all that hair" went. This member is willing to pay that price for those times she

looks into the mirror and smiles at what she sees. This member finds happiness in doing things which makes member #2 scratch her head and wonder why anyone would go to so much trouble. Both members are happy with themselves. Being happy with ourselves is of supreme importance.

To member #1: Good luck on your diet. Make your own decisions as to what is right in your life. Try to find happiness in the male side of your life also. When you can only be happy while dressed, you limit many wonderful experiences from your life. Take the improvements in your character you have learned while dressing, then apply them to your life while wearing your most male clothing.

To member #2: At whatever level of crossdressing you find contentment, stay there until you, and only you, decide you want to try more. Make your own decisions about what is right in your life. You have discovered how to be content in both sides of your life. You are what Tri Ess is all about. Be happy.

We know some have been disappointed by our not publishing everything you've sent to us. We have had to pick and choose. It is in the picking and choosing we are able to offer you the quality of content we've managed to this point.

We want to continue presenting you with as good a magazine as is in our ability. You will notice with this edition, an enhancement in the visual appeal of the magazine. We are now operating fully electronically using Jaye's Macintosh II based Desk Top Publishing equipment which enables us to output directly in camera ready copy. Thus our production cycle is shorter and we are able to produce a far higher quality product for you.

Thanks are also due to Tri-Ess Member Laura Lambert for providing us with an electronic scanner (which we used to scan a number of graphics for this edition.) Thank You, Laura!

We also are in need of original cartoons, photographs (black and white are best), as well as your continued written efforts. The more the merrier. Keep the materials coming.

Oh yes, we need advertising too. Rates are as follows:

Full Page (per issue):	\$250.00
Half Page "	\$135.00
Quarter Page "	\$ 95.00
Business Card "	\$ 25.00

(Tri-Ess Members: Less 20% off these rates)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Jeanette,

Hi there, from California. It has been some time since I last wrote to *The Femme Mirror* and you. I am very glad to see the publication going well. Without it, Tri-Ess could not hold together.

The current edition came in the mail today. I read your article on page one. It is very well put. You are right. We do owe a "thank you" to the Gay Community. However, we also owe a "thank you" to many many others who have helped us. We owe thanks to the gay rights movement. Their getting where they now are has helped us too. The civil rights movement in the sixties released the flow necessary to stop discrimination, not only against blacks, but against other minorities such as gays and the transgendered. We also have the women's liberation movement to thank. Their cause preceded even the civil rights movement. The fathers of our Constitution too, made provisions for the freedoms we see today, for all people in this country. We have a long chain to follow before we even reach the gay rights movement.

I am not saying this to put the movement down in any way. I just want to make it understood there are others who came before who should not be forgotten. All who follow them owe them gratitude.

Although the gay rights movement made it easier for us today, it did not and will not get us out of the closet, or make us respectable, normal, and productive citizens in the eyes of the public. The public still has the impression we are part of the gay community. Is this true? If indeed we are part of the gay community, then we did dash out the door as you said. If we are indeed part of that community, though, we probably helped to bring about change for the betterment of that community and ours. But if we are not part of the gay community, we have them to thank for opening the door a little wider for us. We also owe them thanks for showing us one method of handling contemporary society.

The public still has the impression we are perverted and abnormal. Is this true? The public is still being led by the nose by a few individuals and organizations. It is being told lies about our community. We are allowing

ourselves to be slandered at every turn. We are allowing ourselves to be fired from our jobs when employers find out about our "mental illness". We are allowing legislation to be passed against us by the far right. We are still allowing the members of the transgender community to suffer pain, anguish, embarrassment, and shame when what we do hurts no one. We are allowing, as a group, our misguided society to tell us that while they have their rights, we have none. Our minority has no right to be free to express our gender feelings. Our minority has no civil rights. Have we really travelled out the door so far?

I am submitting a few articles for your consideration for publication. The first article is about the organization of the Gender Alternative League (GAL). It is about time the gender community, even with its differences, got together in the '90s, to accomplish what the gay rights movement accomplished in the '70s and '80s for its community.

Love,

Cynthia Howard
PO Box 3392
Napa CA 94558

Thank you for your response. I agree with you. Other groups and causes helped pave the way for crossdressers to enjoy certain freedoms. The Gay Community, however, has received a "knock" from some members of our group. My article was designed to make our members think in a more positive way toward gays in general. I also agree even though the door has been opened, there is much to be accomplished. The first article you offered can be found in this issue. The others are planned for later issues.

Editor



Dear Sister,

Yesterday I received the Spring FEMME MIRROR. While I found most of the articles and columns interesting I once again had the feeling that I was only being allowed a short glimpse of a very exclusive club.

Two years ago when I first joined Tri-Ess I thought that I had at last found an organization that understood and would be helpful. Now though, I see Tri-Ess as a group of very tight cliques.

What do I have to do to find help and support? Because I'm 6'4", built like a man, with a man's voice, I'll never pass and will be ignored by those of you who can wear a Size 10 and sound like Shirley Temple.

I have to believe that the majority of Tri-Ess sisters are like me. Most dress on the sly, pray that no one will catch them, and dream of just stepping outside in the daylight just once.

I'm not sure I know exactly what I want out of the organization, but I do know it's none of what I've seen in the last two years. I do know that there are a lot of us "ugly's" out here that need help.

Perhaps encouragement from the officers of the local chapters to get out and get acquainted. Why not rap groups or quality circles instead of fancy dress balls and afternoon teas? I need to talk to other CD's and I really don't care about the coming and going of the Queen and her court.

Why don't I do something? Because unlike the ladies I read about in the MIRROR I can't afford to sacrifice my life to indulge my compulsion. I have to be very careful to protect my family and my business. While I would be very willing to work for the group in a carefully controlled environment I cannot don panties and a skirt and go strolling down Main Street.

There is also the question of experience. I can't lead a group for the same reason a private can't lead an army. Where are the officers of our army? My guess is they're at a Tea Party in Texas while the troops are dying in the trenches.

I'm sure by now it's obvious to you that I have a lot on my mind and that I'm a very poor writer. Should you wish to pursue this I can be reached at the address below, via "plain brown wrapper"!

Sincerely,

Caroline NJ-2629-G

Caroline: I can't begin to explain how disturbed I was

after receiving your letter, not because I disagreed with you but rather because of the areas in which we agree. I feared The Femme Mirror has presented only one side of the issue: everything about being feminine is wonderful and there are no pitfalls. Like you "I can't sacrifice my life to indulge my compulsion". I believe we represent the majority of our members. The thing that scares me is: we have led many of our members to believe, if you are not bold and reckless you are not a good crossdresser. I assure you, this was not our desire. We would prefer our members live happy lives, free of fear, free of guilt, and free of pressure to conform to someone else's idea of what a good crossdresser should be. The articles presented are there to help you to think and at times fantasize. Please don't fool yourself into believing you have to be like any other member. Find happiness in the totality of your life, whether it be closeted or in public. No member of this organization has any right to judge you for limiting your crossdressing to an arena in which you feel safe. On the other hand, please don't feel bitterness for those who want more. They also have a right.

A Daughter's Feelings

Hi! My name is Tee, short for Theresa. My Dad, known to you as Diane, asked me to write a letter about our family. When I asked him what to say, he simply said, "Say it like it is." Hmmm, where do I start? I need to say that my parents were different from most of my friends' families in many ways. My mother, who passed away last year, was Catholic and my Dad is a Baptist - a mixed marriage to start with. Our family values are built on three strong beliefs: God, Family and Country.

The one question Dad asked me to address is how his crossdressing has affected my brothers Ken and D.J. and me. I can only say that the parents we have had are the kind that other kids wish they had. If crossdressing made Dad the person he is, then I am all for it.

I don't believe that my Dad has the same ideas as some of the people I have seen on TV where their kids call them "Auntie" when they are dressed. Dad would have a major problem with that and so would we.

When Mom and Dad left home to go out, he never left the house dressed. He always dressed in the van so as not to run into anyone they might know. That was my mother's biggest fear. As for my friends, they are cool and would understand (I hope). If someone found out, I don't think they would intentionally try to hurt us directly or indirectly.

We could bring friends home at any time without any fear of what we might find. I cannot remember ever seeing Dad only partly dressed. Maybe that is what made his feminine side so real and not ugly. He takes

pride in who he is. We never saw him as Diane except at times when we all agreed that "she" should be there. It was only a few times a year and only for short periods. I must say, he did not mind if we poked a little fun at him. When we did, though, it was with respect, not to ridicule. One needs a sense of humor if one is going to understand just how to accept that which is, at best, difficult.

I am sixteen years old. At no time in my life has Dad's crossdressing ever interfered with our family life. Someday, I hope that all kids will have strong families just like ours. I can think of no higher honor or praise we can give Mom and Dad than to make them as proud of us as we are of them.

The daughter of the one you call Diane
But the one we call Dad,

Tee

(Reprinted from Alpha Omega's Outreach, June 1990)

Thanks Tri-Ess

Dear Carol,

I'm sure I speak for thousands when I say "thank you" for being there. Even though the Tri-Ess membership is just over a thousand, it reaches far beyond that. A few months back, I sent an article to the FEMME MIRROR expressing my thanks to you, Virginia, and all the gals who have helped me grow. It would be nice to see it in one of the upcoming issues.

Many times I hear sisters grumbling about the MIRROR being late again or some other thing about the Sorority. Just like a bunch of old women.... it tickles me. Some people just don't seem to have sense enough to realize that most of us do what we do in addition to living a reasonably 'normal' life. I guess they come to expect certain things, but forget there are real 'people' making these things happen.

Denise (FL 2746 S)

Dear Jeanette,

I read your article "A Few Words From The Editor", Spring *Femme Mirror*. I agree with what you have to say. We as crossdressers owe much to the Gay Community. Gay people have pioneered the Gender movement. They have earned social reform. Meanwhile, we have hidden and hung onto their coattails. As we hung on to the Gay Community we voiced disdain for their life style calling them all kinds of names. Then when we feel the urge to express our feminine selves, we seek safe haven within the Gay Community.

We are very lucky to be accepted by some and

tolerated by most people within the Gay Community. ETVC in San Francisco has worked with the Gay Community in AIDS fund raising projects, Gay Freedom Day, and Gay Pride as well as serving as "Hat Check Girls" at some of their parties.

What I am trying to say is: Please, let's look at the Gay Community as friends. They have done much to help us. I think we should return their help by supporting the Gay Community. Don't forget, they are PEOPLE just like us. They are people, just as we are, who do not conform to society's expectations. They deserve our support!

You still spell your name wrong!!!

Janette (CA 2880 C)

More Thoughts from Janette

Dear Jaye,

Outside the rain comes down. We've been seriously short of water, so this is good. Yet, it is a moody time.

I've thought of the past year and the things happening to me. My life is changed forever, and I'm glad. The year has brought many good things. It brought some sad ones too.

The good far outweighs the sad. One of the good things is, I am truly happy with myself for once in my lifetime. One of the bad things, as you know, is dealing with all the emotions unleashed inside when we come to know our feminine selves. At times I am overwhelmed with everything feminine. I find myself wishing I could close my eyes and wake up to find the error at birth had been corrected. Then good sense sets in. I realize I am doing the best I can with what I have. The woman in me lives even though she is in a male body. I really enjoy being what I am. If I had the power to change my physical self, I would not.

I see those big "macho" jerks running around making fools out of themselves trying to impress the ladies. They really look foolish. I could never act the way they act or do the things they do. They really are disgusting.

For all of this and for more too, I have many good friends in Tri-Ess to thank. Without Tri-Ess, I would still be in the dark, questioning, "Why Me?". I hope Tri-Ess grows and continues to support others in the positive way I have been supported.

- Janette C. (CA 2880 C)

Dear Editor,

When I received the Spring 1990 edition of *The Femme Mirror*, my eyes quickly spotted your book review of "Transformations" by Mariette Pathy Allen. I went to a bookstore in my area and found they had it in stock. Needless to say, I found this pictorial essay a true piece of art. Ms. Allen must be commended for her art work. The biographical sketches were right on target. This book has helped me to come to even better terms with myself and my feminine self. I strongly suggest it as "must" reading for every crossdresser. It was enjoyable and educational reading. I have yet to put it down. Again, thanks for letting us know about this book. Keep up the good work with *The Femme Mirror*.

Sincerely,

Joanne Michelle (NJ 2548 W)

Dear Jeanette,

I am enclosing a couple of pieces which you might be able to use. Goodness! I thought you would be swamped with materials and after submitting a piece to you a couple of issues ago, I thought if we all only contributed ONE piece a year you would have enough to go on for the next ten years.

Well, you're quite right - if we want something to read then it's up to us to supply the materials. The Spring Issue which just arrived was very interesting. I'd like to say how much I enjoyed "Rehab Center" by Nancy Anne. A nice Orwellian touch there.

The enclosed poem "When I Was Just a Little Child" was read at last year's "Be All" in Chicago. The "Good Morning, Universe" was fun to write. Perhaps someone has more to add to Agathon's role as a dramatist and also a crossdresser. I am reminded of the fun Oscar Wilde must have had in his short story, "The Portrait of Mr. W. H." One can only imagine that Juliet, Miranda, and all Shakespeare's lovely heroines were played not just by boys or young men, but that they crossdressed the part so effectively that they indeed did provide the inspiration that carried the Bard to such great heights.

Anyway, to all of you who do the real work of getting the FEMME MIRROR out to us - thank you!

Sincerely,

Louise Catherine Milner
FCBC-2602-S

Dear Jeanette,

When I opened my mail box today, there it was, my FEMME MIRROR. Even though it was in that brown envelope, I knew my long awaited magazine had arrived. I do look forward to it very much. Many thanks to you and your staff for putting out a nice magazine like this, especially in this day and age when vulgarity is so prevalent.

I was so surprised when after turning several pages I noticed my name under a letter. It had been so long, I had forgotten I had written to you. Also, it was the first time anything I had written had ever been printed. Gee!!

Regarding Sharon's letter and her need for a "cover story", I notice a lot of men (in fact, mostly athletes) with nary (PUN) a hair. I heard one time that great swimmers shave to give them more speed. Hair holds them back milliseconds that might make the difference between victory and defeat. Also, I think men with good looking bods shave just because it looks better. I do of course shave all my body about once a month, usually before each society meeting. The reason for this has nothing to do with athletics. I do play water volleyball twice a week in our club house pool, however, and no one has ever said anything.

Do you mean your real sisters, Sharon? I have five sisters, and they knew I used to be hairy. But, they've seen me at our reunion on the ocean beach and now also know all of them that I crossdress. When they found out (they didn't see me dressed) it was a little scary. We almost left for home, but one of the five brothers-in-law talked me out of it. We all sat around our table for twelve and discussed it and problems all of them had. We held hands, hugged, shed a few tears, and then we all went swimming. When arriving home I felt a load was removed from my back, and I felt Free At Last - Free At Last.

Ever since that episode, my feminine self Nancy has really come out and done things I never would have thought of doing before. Such as, after seeing a CD sister dressed in her square dance dress with all her petticoats, asking her where she got the outfit. I just had to have one. The next day, after calling and telling them I was another CD, I asked if I could come in. I spent one of the most exciting times of my life in that Western Store. With Janice, the nicest sales lady, helping me try on dresses and petticoats in the dressing room, there was never a mention or hint that I wasn't Nancy. I couldn't believe I did this! But I want to go back. I even wrote Janice a letter of utmost thanks for her caring and help. (P.S. It was a nice sale for her, too.)

Gee, it sounds so wonderful, reading Laura Lambert's letter. She seems to have expertise with so many things to help us in so many ways. I second your

comment about her response and all the help she may be able to give.

Well, I hope you're not tired of my ramblings. When I sit to write I'm always dressed as if I'm meeting you as a sister. I do get so excited with my bracelets jangling on the edge of the desk, my red nails holding this paper under my desk lamp, my red shirtwaist, cotton, full skirted dress on, my matching red pumps, and my freshly shaved legs encased in new nylons, what can I say!!

You ladies keep happy, too. I hope to see some or all of you at Fantasia Fair this year.

With love and hugs,

Nancy Ann MD-2655-B

So You Think You Don't Need a Post OfficeBox

One evening a short time ago, I received a call from a crossdresser in Florida. She related a tale of outright malice that should give all of us pause for thought.

Her story was that she had tried to make contact with the crossdresser support group in the Orlando area. Although she was not aware of it, the address she had for the president was an old one and she was no longer at that location. Compounding the problem, since she did not have a mailbox, she included her street address for a response. The bigoted individual who now lived at that address, instead of just marking the letter "Return to Sender", opened it, read it, and then put it into another envelope addressed to the sender's wife, who was not aware of her husband's crossdressing. He was able to preserve his marriage, but just barely.

So you think you don't need a Post Office Box? Think again.

-Jackie TX-2619-T

(Reprinted from the Gulf Coast Transvestite Chapter Newsletter, April 1990)

Library Outreach

For many years Tri-Ess has had a policy of getting information about crossdressing into local public and college libraries. Ideally, you could walk up to the desk and present the librarian with a free copy of whatever crossdressing books that you wished to do-

nate, open the clipping/ pamphlet file and insert copies of your local chapter newsletter and xerox copies of articles on crossdressers. On your way out you could thoughtfully place a stack of Tri-Ess brochures on the handout table and insert card catalog cards under Transvestism, Crossdressing, and Eonism.

I am sure that there are some sisters out there who have no security problems (retired and/ or independently wealthy, perhaps) and who have done basically that, and I am sure that there are some libraries who would accept and utilize all of the material. But here in the real world for most of us this is not a viable option because most of us cannot afford to be identified as crossdressers to the general public, and I suspect that a lot of librarians would never go along with any of it.

Here is a strategy which some sisters have used.

Enter with a small pack containing the following: a small stack of library cards (obtainable from Carol Beecroft or simply typed out on a 3 X 5 card with a notch cut in the bottom); scotch tape; Tri-Ess brochures; xerox copies of whatever articles or newsletters you want to put in the vertical file; the word "Crossdressing" or "Transvestism" typed on gummed labels; a Number 2 pencil; and file folders (the same size used in the library file).

Start by inserting the three cards in the card file (if it's all microchip you're out of luck here). Move on to the vertical file (which is usually buried in the back of the library). They will usually have a file on transsexuals. To this file simply add your material and slap on your gummed labels which makes it look like a library category. If at all possible just add your own file folder. Next locate all of the books which may have a section on crossdressing, such as Sociology, Psychology, Mental Health, etc., and tape an extra card in the back of the cover. Write that day's date on the card. On the way out drop off a brochure or two.

Wait a few months and go back to check and see if everything is still in place (or needs replacement).

It is not clear that all of this is either legal, illegal, or even safe, but over the years a whole lot of sisters have found us because the first place they look is the public library, and one of their local sisters went to the trouble of making sure that information was there for them.

-Marlene CA-1046-L



Sample Cards:

TRANVESTISM - the desire to dress in the clothing of the opposite sex. For information pertaining to transvestism, including books and a self-help organization for heterosexual crossdressers with local chapters in the _____ metropolitan area for those with an interest in transvestism, please write to:

The Society for the Second Self
Carol Beecroft
P.O. Box 194
Tulare, CA 93275

CROSS DRESSING - the wearing of clothing appropriate to the opposite sex. For information pertaining to cross dressing, including books and a self-help organization for heterosexual crossdressers with local chapters in the _____ metropolitan area, please write to:

The Society for the Second Self
Carol Beecroft
P.O. Box 194
Tulare, CA 93275

EONISM - the desire to wear the clothing of the opposite sex. Term coined by Havelock Ellis. Transvestism, crossdressing. For information, including books and a self-help organization for heterosexual crossdressers with local chapters in the _____ metropolitan area, please write to:

The Society for the Second Self
Carol Beecroft
P.O. Box 194
Tulare, CA 93275

Dear Jeanette,

A short note to say a job well done in the spring issue of *The Femme Mirror*. I would like to congratulate you and your staff. The stories and quality content meets what I am looking for as a Tri-Ess member. I am going to make a sincere effort to mail material to be considered for publication, as requested in your Editor's column. After all IT IS OUR PUBLICATION.

Sincerely,

Rhonda (OH 2499 M)

Dear Jeanette,

Just got my Spring issue of the MIRROR and I couldn't put it down until I had read it from cover to cover. One article I would like to comment on is the one you titled, "So Why Are You Always Late?" I have to say that all three reasons are good ones. To me if it takes a little time to put out a high quality issue, so be it. And let me say that you haven't let me down yet.

Getting back to the third reason you gave about not getting enough materials from us girls, here is a tidbit you can print:

Not only am I a happy TV, I'm what you could call an extra large woman. I try not to let my weight get in the way of looking my best as Valerie. I try to buy the most up to date fashions a girl of my size can find. I do most of my buying through catalogs such as Lane Bryant, Roaman's, etc.

When I purchased my new spring outfit there was a subscription with it for a magazine for the large woman. So I had to subscribe to it just to see if they had anything they could offer a girl like me.

Well, let me tell you that if any of you sisters out there has a weight problem, this magazine is for you. Not only do they have some nice feature departments, they offer great fashion and beauty departments. Their "Focus Beauty" is terrific, and what is even better is their fashion department. They don't have girls who are a Size 10 modeling their clothes. They have girls Sizes 16 Plus doing it. And let me tell you, they are in some darling clothes.

So I would like to pass this information on to any of my sisters out there who are a beautiful Size 16 Plus or larger. Girls, there is help for us large women out there and it is in a magazine called "BBW". I guess you can figure out that "BBW" stands for Big Beautiful Woman. So go out to your local newsstand and check out their latest issue. It has helped me.

One last thing before I go. Jeanette, you and the girls just keep up the good work. Remember, it is always better late than never.

Your sister,

Valerie NJ-2560-R

THE CONCEPT OF THE MERGE AND THE TRANSFORMER

by
Michelle Kingsbury

It is nothing new to hear someone claim that crossdressing allows a person to release his "girl within," to express those personality traits that are normally not permitted to those who are locked into the male role. (The philosophy was first expounded by Virginia Prince's Understanding Crossdressing and Bruce's "The Expression of Femininity in the Male.") According to such advocates, people are socialized into two general categories — masculinity and femininity, each of which has its own distinctive list of do's and don't's. The personalities and behaviors that go with these two categories are more or less mutually exclusive. That is, those behaviors that are reserved for the masculine category are not reserved for the feminine category, and those behaviors that are reserved for the feminine category are not reserved for the masculine category. Masculine and feminine roles function as the sum total of all the personality traits (and corresponding behaviors) that make up a particular category. To Prince's advocates, crossdressing serves to unlock the barrier which separates these two categories and allow men who are normally trapped in the masculine role to "escape" and experience the feminine role.

The basic message here is of course the androgynous ideal. One who crossdresses should be able to expand his horizons by using (albeit temporarily) the opportunity to tap both the masculine and the feminine for his desired brand of personality expression. However, one implicit message in this philosophy which may be open to question is the belief that clothing/crossdressing is necessary for experiencing this androgyny. Nor is it necessarily true that a person can only exhibit traits appropriate to his current outward appearance (that is, solely choosing from the feminine category while dressed as a woman and solely choosing from the masculine category while dressed as a man).

At least as early as the 1930's (with J.C. Flugel's The Psychology of Clothes) and the 1950's (with Lawrence Langner's The Importance of Wearing Clothes), clothing researchers have praised the value of garments in bringing about certain behaviors and attitudes within individuals. Essentially the "clothes make the man" adage, they support this common sense belief with such examples as: a man dresses as a slob, therefore he feels and acts like a slob; a woman puts on a stiff and professional suit, therefore she feels and acts like a professional; and finally, a man dresses up in soft, feminine attire, therefore he feels and acts feminine.

Such specific examples seem to be part of a general principle where clothing serves as a lens to bring out, nurture, project, and amplify personality components which are already within an individual, but for

some reason are blocked, slowed, or stifled by some source (usually socially-constructed roles or norms). This is not to say that a person cannot act in a certain way without the aid of clothes. To use the above examples, there are of course well-dressed slob, casually-dressed professionals, and masculinely-dressed men who are feminine. These traits already exist within an individual to begin with, so they may be expressed at any time. However, clothing serves as a lens, to amplify these traits, to make it easier for a person to express them. (This idea can appropriately be named the "clothing lens effect.")

Why clothing functions as a lens is open to speculation. Perhaps the clothes function as a crutch, to support people through socially difficult situations. Perhaps they serve as a concrete definition or reference point on how to act, much analogous to how an individual will turn to other persons in order to define how he should act (especially in an ambiguous situation). Perhaps it is a differential treatment mechanism, where observers view a person dressed a certain way and treat him in a way that corresponds to the schema that those clothes trigger. This in turn causes the original person to act in a way that corresponds to his clothes. Or perhaps there is some intrinsic quality of the clothing itself, such as materials or texture, that brings about specific behaviors. Whatever the explanation, the effect of clothing on behavior is a very observable phenomenon in everyday life, despite the lack of empirical research which has been devoted to the subject.

It is also unknown why clothing affects behavior in some people more than others. Perhaps it depends on some individual variable, such as that person's sensitivity to outside cues, or perhaps it depends on that person's need for a lens to help express his personality. Or it may depend on outside factors, such as how many barriers interfere with one's personality expression. Nor can we be certain why the effects of clothing on behavior tend to lessen over time for some individuals (e.g., a student with disciplinary problems despite wearing a professional uniform). The answer to this latter question, I would hypothesize, would either be simple adaptation (repeated exposure/ use dulls its power), the possibility that incompatible personality traits override the clothing lens effect (in the case of the student, he may have strong anti-conformist tendencies), or the perception that a person is being forced to dress in a certain way (people like to believe they are in control over their own destinies and rebel when they feel otherwise), thus cancelling any positive effects the clothing may bestow.

Crossdressers appear strongly sensitive to the influence of clothing on personality. Among the most

common effects are increased extroversion, femininity, and self-confidence. Furthermore, they appear capable of maintaining this sensitivity over long periods of time. They dress up because they want to, not because they feel they're forced to; they usually dress up irregularly instead of every day, thus reducing adaptation effects.

Assuming that an individual can be significantly affected by clothing in the first place, there appear to be three possible avenues that this effect can take. First, the person may eventually stop expressing personality despite still dressing up in certain clothes. This can be due to adaptation of the clothing, newly-formed incompatible personality traits, the perception that he is forced to dress up, or he may discover that after trying out these new traits he does not necessarily like them. Second, the person may continue on as before, relying on the clothing as a crutch to lean on or a lens to help penetrate various barriers to personality expression. Usually in this case there is a perception that the clothes are necessary for the trait expression. This is the philosophy Prince has advocated. Third, and most important for this paper, the person may begin to internalize these new personality traits into his psyche, amplifying them and ultimately being able to express these traits on his own, without the aid of clothes.

This is the concept of "merge".

When a person who has utilized the clothing lens effect for personality amplification realizes (either consciously or unconsciously) that clothing is not a necessary condition for expressing those personality traits, he has merged. That is, feeling or behaving in a particular way is not restricted to specific times and places but can be expressed whenever and wherever the desire is present.

Crossdressing serves as a very good example to illustrate merge due to its dealings with the two more or less mutually exclusive categories of masculine and feminine. Under the clothing lens effect, crossdressing serves to amplify those (feminine) traits that are normally blocked or suppressed by socially constructed barriers. Many crossdressers, for whatever reason, cannot express these feminine behaviors without the aid of clothes, so fenced in are they to the masculine role. In addition to this, as many crossdressers temporarily enter the feminine role, they temporarily step out of the masculine role; thus while en femme, they frequently express exclusively feminine traits and leave their masculine traits behind.

When a transvestite merges, this "either-or" distinction tends to blur. Such a person becomes capable of expressing more and more feminine traits while dressed as a man. Likewise, masculine traits begin creeping into his crossdressed state. Ultimately for the merged individual, the social barriers that separate the masculine and the feminine begin to dissolve, so that

those two words become meaningless as dividers and useful only as convenient adjectives. As a result of this, a merged individual's masculine persona and femme identity will eventually fuse into one being, so that each is fully capable of feeling the same thoughts and exhibiting the same behaviors, with the only major difference between them being that one happens to wear pants and the other happens to wear skirts. For this reason, any trait or behavior is fair game (unless it is ego dystonic or was never there to begin with) in either identity, regardless of whether it is masculine or feminine.

A merged person is very similar to an androgynous person in the end result. The difference lies in the processes that were undergone to achieve this end result. The androgynous person has always been androgynous. He has expressed both masculine and feminine traits since an early age; rewards of various kinds served to ingrain each category into his psyche, thus creating his well-rounded personality. The merged person has not always been merged. His earlier life was confined to one specific set of traits, usually masculine in the case of transvestites. Through the clothing lens effect, discovered at some later point in his life, he found himself capable of broadening the amount of traits available to him. Eventually he could internalize these traits, applying them within his own psyche and being able to express his traits without the necessary aid of clothing, thus being merged.

Merge is not limited to the categories of masculinity and femininity, though these are probably the most easily recognized. Merge may apply to any situation where clothing is originally used for the purpose of aiding the expression of some trait not normally in a person's psyche. This includes, but is not limited to, increasing extroversion (common in crossdressers), loosening inhibitions (the mask and costume phenomenon), and improving discipline (the reasoning behind uniforms). The only prerequisite is that the person originally had some difficulty expressing that trait until experiencing the clothing lens effect and subsequently the internalized trait.

Once a transvestite merges his two personas, he may still crossdress for various reasons, whether they be sexual arousal (fetishism), intense identification with women (the transgenderist phenomenon), or more commonly, because some other facet of personality is still undergoing the process of merge. The last reason makes sense when one understands that merge covers not one set of personality traits but a wide range of various traits and that an individual set of clothing may influence a person on many levels. In the case of the transvestite, he may have merged his masculine and feminine personas, but women's clothing may still serve to increase extroversion or decrease other inhibitions due to the clothing lens effect. That is, he has merged on one level but not on another. Merge, therefore, is an ongoing process that will not end until all traits and

behaviors can be expressed wherever and whenever, regardless of what type of clothing is being worn.

Since clothing does not only affect outward behavior but actual feelings on a personality level, I have coined the term "transformer" as a possible alternative name for those who crossdress for purposes of altering their personality for whatever reason. I use this word because crossdressing affects the person across his entire psyche, changing the very form of his being. This

aply fits with the frequent reference that most crossdressers make toward their "girl within", referring to her as a separate entity, a distinct person with a life of her own.

Ed. Note: *This article originally appeared in Crossroads Chatter. Michelle is a member of Crossroads and may be written c/o Crossroads, P.O. Box 1245, Royal Oak, MI 48068-1245* 

IS GOD AGAINST US?

by
LEE FRANCES

Is God neutral regarding our practice of crossdressing or is He against us? Our lifestyle or the occasional practice of crossdressing in "the closet" is a deviation from the norms of society. We have been told that we are unacceptable to society and especially church society and have been branded sinners by the church, so how could God ever stoop to love a crossdresser? In some cases families are divided over the fact that Dad is a crossdresser and have ended in divorce. We can be a real source of conflict and emotional upset to others. "God is not the God of confusion and disorder" (1 Cor. 14: 33a) God has declared us to be an abomination to Himself "...Neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy 22: 5) It looks like God and society are both lined up against us. How can we win against those odds? We can!

Way back in the beginning of recorded Biblical history Moses tells us in Genesis, Chapter 6, that already "...God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented God that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast and the creeping things and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them'". Thus the Great Flood and Noah's Ark. Noah and his family and the animals were the only ones spared.

After the Flood Noah opened the Ark and the animals and birds and creeping things were released. Then Noah communed with God. "...And the Lord said in His heart, 'I will not curse the ground anymore for man's sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite anymore every living thing, as I have done.'" (Genesis 8: 20)

Again in Genesis 9: 11 He says that never again will there be a universal flood. "I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off

anymore by the waters of a flood; neither shall there anymore be a flood to destroy the earth."

All that happened in the Flood was that one bad crop of humans was destroyed. The ground had dried and Noah made him a vineyard, harvested the grapes, made wine and consequently got drunk. As Noah staggered to his bed, his cloak fell off and he slept naked. His son Ham saw him naked and it was against the levitical law for a son to see his father naked. (Lev. 18: 7-8) Speculation has it that Ham violated the sexual code with his father. (Gen. 9: 24) Biblical scholars and commentaries at best can only say that this is a fuzzy area. The fact I am trying to bring out is that sin has flourished since the beginning of mankind and even the Flood didn't wash it out.

In order to place some control on man's evil nature God set forth, by the Holy Spirit through Moses (beginning with the 20th chapter of Exodus and continuing on through Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) the Ten Commandments and other rules, regulations, and ordinances. This was a spiritual fence built by God to keep His children protected from the surrounding evil pagan world. The law of God is burned into everyone of our hearts by the Holy Spirit to make us aware of our shortcomings. Therefore we as Christians are extremely

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sensitive and acutely aware of sin in our lives.

Let's get to the point of all this which is to lay (your false, as you will see) guilt where it belongs. On Jesus Christ. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1: 29)

Simply put, God got sick of sinful man once again and took upon Himself the person of Jesus Christ and came into the world He had created. He lived and taught and then took upon Himself the sins of the past, present, and future, thus becoming our sin-bearer. In His atoning death upon the cross He fulfilled His own pronouncement and declaration in Ezekiel 18: 4, "...The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Sin is atoned for by a sacrificial lamb and Jesus Christ became that lamb for us, the human race —including crossdressers.

Finally, "Having cancelled and blotted out and wiped away the note, the bond, and the ordinances with its legal decrees and demands which was in force and stood against us (hostile to us); this note with its regulations and decrees and demands, He set aside and cleared completely out of our way, nailing it to His cross." (Colossians 2: 14)

We are not sinners because we crossdress. Our very nature is sinful and it is the same inherited sin nature and condition that every human has. There is always the conflict of good and evil. We possess a grossly enlarged sense of guilt because we crossed the invisible line between male and female. We are men making like women. Wow! This is really a mind-blowing thing, but I'll save any further comment for another time. In the meantime we can't entertain the notion that we are alienated from God because of the fact that we crossdress. We are what we are and we are exactly as God made us.

Crossdressing and sin are not synonymous. A thumbnail sketch of the Hebrew word translated "abomination" is to ebah and is connected with the idolatry of the pagan world where crossdressing was for ceremonial sexual purposes. My crossdressing doesn't fall into that category. I see no sin in our crossdressing.

Heavenly days! I have tried to condense a 300 page book into a few paragraphs. As a crossdresser, as Lee Frances, I pray that the Lord will use these few words to ease some long held guilt and give mental relief. He is for us as human beings, as His creation, so let us allow Him to bless (make happy) our lives. We have already discovered that we are helpless to do anything about our crossdressing, even after purges and beseeching God for deliverance (plus in many cases, trips to the altar for deliverance). For booze, dope, and tobacco there is divine deliverance. I have been delivered from all three by divine intervention. To ask for deliverance from the very nature God gave us and from the way He made us is an unreasonable expectation. I

tried it. It didn't work.

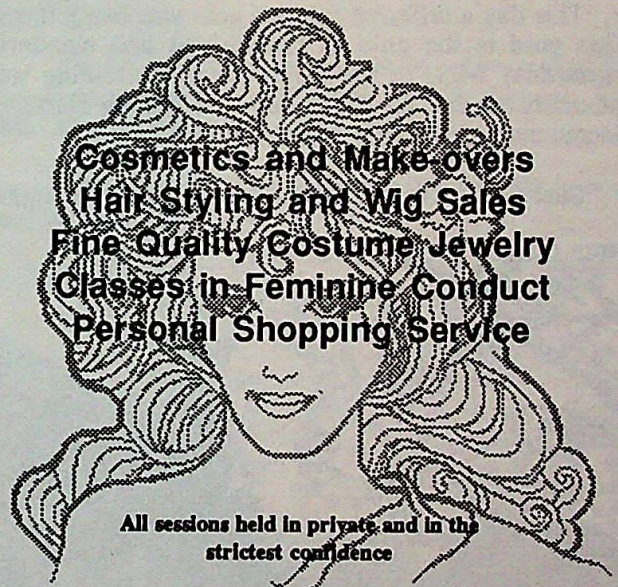
If my love for you is in each word I have written, then how much more is His love for you. As crossdresser to crossdresser I say, God BLESS you!!

(Lee Frances MS-2125-H is "semi-retired" from a long career in ministry. She welcomes correspondence at P.O. Box 31253, Jackson, MS 39286-1253)



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Northern California Report

(Submitted by: Janette Campbell (CA2880C))

Dawn broke gently as the first rays of light swept down the ridges of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. In the foothills, Nevada City, CA, slumbered. The day would bring much.

The ninth of June was not particularly different for most people in Nevada City. For the Tri-Ess sisters gathering to be hostessed by Betsy Briggs, it was a signal day.

Nevada City has seen many a happy face. The whole region, in fact, saw many happy faces during the famous Gold Rush Days of yore. For more than ninety years, between 1850 and WWII, the gold mines of the Grass Valley area produced nearly \$8,000,000.00 annually in gold bullion.

This day a different form of gold was being mined. This gold is the gold of friendships and wonderful memories. Most of the ladies doing the mining were members of the Tri-Ess group just getting started in Sacramento, down in the hot valley below.

Sheryl Ann Taylor (Sacramento), Terri Lee Campbell

(Oroville), Charla Clark (Yuba City), Joan Sheldon (San Jose'), Kim Cornett (Sacramento), Leona Martin (Grass Valley), Jody Beeman (W. Sacramento), Janette Campbell (Sebastapol) and the three lovely female participants: Toni Carson (Yuba City), Barbara Hudson (Lincoln), and Margaret Martin (Grass Valley) made up the guest list.

Soon the fresh air of the mountainside bore hints of a great meal the group was to enjoy. Prepared by hostess Betsy Briggs with help by Leona Martin, it was a total delight to all. Good company and conversation was everywhere evident. Smiles abounded as all had enjoyment to spare.

Truly, in the golden surroundings of this beautiful Sierra Nevada setting, a rare graciousness of hospitality was abundant. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to Betsy for a truly memorable evening.

Be sure, friends out there in Mirror Land.... Tri-Ess is alive and growing in Northern California....



A re You Reaching Out?

by

Roger Peo, PhD

Recent newsletters from several organizations have had letters from people who have visited a crossdressers' group meeting for the first time. Most of these letters mention the fear and panic that accompany the first exploration of this setting. These descriptions present two recurring situations.

Most stories begin by describing a general feeling of relief this "first timer" experiences when finally being in the presence of others who share similar feelings. After the first few minutes he finds he is not so different after all.

When the time comes to socialize with others the accounts seem to split into two categories. The first is general acceptance of the newcomer into the group. The person is introduced to others and these people take time to make the novice feel at home. Such stories generally end with the person feeling very good about having taken the risk to attend the meeting.

The other portion of these descriptions often does not have such a happy ending. After the initial introductions the "old timers" begin sharing stories with each other. The newcomer is left out. It may be a long time before he returns, if he ever does.

I would guess that all of us have entered some gathering for the first time. If we got there a bit late we might see other people talking in small groups, sharing situations that happened to them since the last meeting. We wondered how to break into one of them and were very grateful when someone noticed our uncertainty and came over or included us in their group.

These reports led me to speculate about the purpose for crossdressers' groups. Most say that they have two reasons for their existence. The first is support for transgendered persons and the second is to provide a safe place for crossdressing. Other reasons often include education of the public on transgender issues and support for partners of transgendered persons. I wonder if many members realize how important it is to provide support for the visitor to a meeting. I know it is scary to go up to someone you don't know and start a conversation, but if you don't, who will? If an organization is not growing then it is dying. People will always be leaving for a variety of reasons. New members are the only way to replace them.

to those around you, especially newcomers. Those who come to a group for the first time may be newly out of the closet and perhaps have never met another person in the same situation as themselves. You have all been there and know how scary that is. A helping hand and supportive smile go a long way to help this newcomer begin the journey to discovery and self-acceptance. From a different viewpoint, remember that this new person will have some very valuable contribution to make to your organization.

I would like to think that crossdressers and their organizations want to be different from many other social groups by caring and supporting others in like situations.

(Dr. Peo invites comments, rebuttals, and suggestions for future columns. Write him at P.O. Box 4887, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602. All communications are confidential.)

(This article was reprinted from the October, 1989, issue of Cross-Talk by special permission of Dr. Peo.)



The purpose of this article is to make you sensitive

Hello!

Date Set For November 14 Thru 18

Houston Gets Ready For Holiday En Femme

TAU CHI Chapter of Houston would like to extend a warm LoneStar Welcome to the 1990 Tri-Ess Holiday En Femme to all our Tri-Ess Sisters, their wives, partners, families, and friends! It will be held at the Hilton Southwest in Houston, Texas, Wed. Nov. 14 through Sun. Nov. 18, 1990.

The Holiday En Femme is an annual event sponsored by the Society for the Second Self, the Tri-Ess Sorority. It affords crossdressers the opportunity to live four full days in their feminine self, to meet crossdressing sisters from around the world, to share with them new ideas and experiences, and to establish friendships as feminine persons can. This Holiday should have a little of everything - personal development, shopping, night life, partying, education, adventure, and maybe even a little free time!

For the first time the Holiday En Femme is being held in Houston, a city rich in cultural ambience, folklore, and heroism. Centrally located, it is easily accessible to Tri-Ess members everywhere. Houston in November is delightfully temperate, with an average daily temperature of about 60 degrees and average November rainfall of about 3 inches. Interesting cultural and historical places abound, including the Astrodome, NASA, excellent theaters and symphony, art museums and the San Jacinto Monument.

The Hilton Southwest has the welcome mat out for us. Conveniently located on the Southwest Freeway, the Hilton is near the Astrodome and the Summit, the Medical Center, Rice University, some superb shopping at the Galleria and Sharpstown malls, and some of Houston's best restaurants and clubs. Luxuriously appointed soundproofed rooms, excellent meeting facilities, and a 4000+ square foot Grand Ballroom are hallmarks of the Hilton. If you take the Airport Shuttle from either of Houston's two airports to the Post Oak Terminal, the Hilton provides a free shuttle to the hotel. The hotel staff, headed by Sales Manager Tammy Kosub, has been a pleasure to work with. They have guaranteed us an unbelievably low group rate of \$45.00 per night. To obtain this rate, you need only identify yourself with Tri-Ess when you call or write for your reservation. Their phone number is (713) 977-7911. Or, you may call Hilton Reservations at (800) 445-8667. You will be able to enjoy your feminine experience in a safe, secure, and completely relaxed atmosphere.

A varied and fulfilling program is being planned for your enjoyment. After registration Wed. afternoon, an evening Reception and Orientation is planned.

Thursday will be Go-Go day! A bus tour will take you to the Hilltop Herb Farm for a delicious four-course lunch, then swing back to the San Jacinto Battleground where on April 21, 1836, Texans under Sam Houston won their independence from Mexico. After returning to the hotel to "turn into butterflies" for the evening, we will go to Magic Island, where we will enjoy a banquet, see a magic show, have our fortunes told, and play Blackjack in an evening of Las Vegas-style entertainment. Friday morning will be free time to shop and enjoy the pampering of image consultants, makeup experts, vendors and



manicurists. Friday learning at seminars on wives' concerns, and interest. Friday evening and Reception, followed, for those who still have functional brain cells left, by an evening on the town. Saturday will feature an historic Tri-Ess Board of Directors Meeting at which we will amplify and further define new directions for our Sorority. Saturday evening will feature our elegant Awards Banquet. On Sunday morning there will be a worship service, followed by a Hail-and-Farewell Brunch - the most bittersweet of times, as we all say goodbye until we meet again.

Y'ALL COME, NOW!

To Attend Holiday En Femme

The Holiday En Femme is a non-profit function sponsored by Tri-Ess for the education and enjoyment of its participants.

Registration Plans

(All Registration Plans are per person.)

Plan A	WED-SUN	\$220
Plan B	THUR-SUN	\$200
Plan C	FRI-SUN	\$135
Plan D	All Day SAT-SUN	\$110
Plan E	SAT NITE ONLY	\$65

If your Registration is postmarked by Oct. 31, 1990, you enjoy the following discounts:

Plan A	\$195		
Plan B	\$180	Plan D	\$95
Plan C	\$115	Plan E	\$55

Registration fees do not include hotel accommodations and certain meals. Enclose check or money order payable to Tri-Ess/ Holiday En Femme. Confirmation with travel directions and other information will be sent upon receipt of your Registration. Accommodations, bar, telephone, Room Service or other charges are payable to the Hilton Southwest upon checkout.

Security

We will hold all personal information in strictest confidence. Neither Texas nor Houston ordinances prohibit crossdressing.

Refunds

All requests for refunds posted on or before Oct. 1, 1990, will be honored 100%. Those posted between Oct. 1 and Oct. 31 will be honored at 50%. We can not guarantee any refund after Nov. 1.

Your Children

Your children are very welcome at the Holiday En Femme. We cannot accept the registration of a person under the age of 18. However, minors may attend with permission of participating parents or guardians. In cases where both parents are not attending we request documentation of permission of both parents. Minors must at all times be under the supervision of a responsible adult. We will attempt to provide child care assistance for those needing it.

Smile! Frowns make facial wrinkles

Registration Form Holiday En Femme 1990

Femme Name _____

Wife or Partner's Name _____

Mailing Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone (Optional) _____

Ask for _____

Chapter Affiliation _____

Arrive Nov. _____ 1990, at _____ AM PM

Depart Nov. _____ 1990, at _____ AM PM

Hotel Reservations: Single _____ Double _____ Couple _____

If mailed by 10/31/90, discounted Registration Fees:
If mailed after 10/31/90, full Registration Fees:

Plan A	WED-SUN	\$195
Plan A	WED-SUN	\$220
Plan B	THUR-SUN	\$180
Plan B	THUR-SUN	\$200
Plan C	FRI-SUN	\$115
Plan C	FRI-SUN	\$135
Plan D	SAT-SUN	\$95
Plan D	SAT-SUN	\$110
Plan E	SAT NITE ONLY	\$55
Plan E	SAT NITE ONLY	\$65

Number of Persons Attending _____

Total Registration Fees Enclosed \$ _____

Make Check or Money Order payable to : Tri-Ess/
Holiday En Femme

Mail Registration and Payment to: Jane Ellen Fairfax,
Coordinator, Holiday En Femme, P.O. Box 1105,
Alief, TX 77411-1105

I understand that programs are subject to change. I agree to abide by the rules and spirit of the Tri-Ess Holiday En Femme.

Signature _____

The Male Order Bride

Diane CO-2715-K

Having discovered my femme self when I was just eleven, I was never surprised when feminine, frilly or lacy clothes caught my eye. I've always had an affinity for soft, silky white clothes in particular. Panties, slips, petticoats, even my blouses, are white more often than not.

So it was really no great surprise to me when, over the years, I fell in love with bridal gowns. To me, they were the ultimate in crossdressing - white, lacy, silky, bouffant skirts - just about everything a girl like me wanted. Of course, as a teenager all I could ever do was dream of my "wedding". I planned it from start to finish, complete with a rehearsal, beauty salon appointments before the wedding, the beautiful ceremony, the reception and all. But that's as far as it could go.

During college, I finally got up the nerve to buy bridal magazines. Why that took so much nerve I really don't know, but like shopping for clothes, I was always nervous buying them. I would spend hours, literally, gazing at the gowns and headpieces shown on page after page of the magazines. I liked almost all of them, but I had my distinct preferences. The gowns that were my favorites all had high necklines, long sleeves, a fitted bodice, a full skirt and, of course, a long train. My favorite headpieces were always very traditional, having a lace-covered bandette and a bouffant, chapel-length veil. The magazines almost always had descriptions of the necessary underpinnings, hoop slips, full petticoats, longline strapless bras and embroidered stockings. Nothing was missed and I pictured myself putting on each and every item. But as always, reality came bashing its way back to my life and there I was, not a bride at all, but a male longing for the feminine.

As the years passed, I managed on occasion to get into the fringes of the bride's world. Once I ordered a bridesmaid's gown out of a catalog and took it to a bridal shop to get a hoopslip to wear under it. Using the excuse that I had to wear the bridesmaid's gown for an initiation, I was completely accepted and the bridal consultants were most helpful. Of course, this was a very expensive venture just to be on the edge of the bride's world, and being "always a bridesmaid, never a bride", while nice, was not what I wanted.

The day finally came when I had had it. I was going to get my bridal gown - and it was not going to be a catalog order, but a carefully selected and special ordered gown from a bridal shop. I began by making a list of all the bridal shops in the area, their addresses and telephone numbers. As nervous as a new bride on her wedding day, I began to make telephone calls to some of



the closest shops in the area.

Understand that I do not pass, or even come close. To see me en femme, unfortunately for me, is to see a genetic male in women's clothes. Nor do I have a soft, feminine voice. There's no mistaking my voice on the phone for a woman's. None-the-less, I called some of the bridal shops. I asked for the owner and when I got to talk to her I'd say, "Hi. My name is Jerry. I need to get a bridal gown for myself. Would you mind if I shopped in your store?"

At the first shop I called, the owner was not in, but the bridal consultant I talked with told me that she personally would love to have me shop there, but the owner would not appreciate it. She was nice enough to give me the names of two women in the area who were expert seamstresses and would probably custom make a gown for me. However much that appealed to me, it was not what I really wanted. My next call was not well received. Even though I assured the shop owner that I was genuinely interested in purchasing a bridal outfit, she could not believe it. On to number three. This was a slightly better reception, but all they would allow me to do was to come in and look in their catalogs and I'd have to order from that. They said they couldn't let me try on any gowns since eventually all the display gowns

get sold to girls for weddings and they just couldn't sell to a girl a dress a guy had worn.

With my fourth call I found my shop. The bridal consultant (and owner) was named Linda. I was direct and made sure she understood I wanted a gown, headpiece, petticoat, gloves and anything else necessary for my own personal use. Linda was a godsend. She said she'd be delighted to help. She did request, however, that we set up an appointment before the normal store hours for me to shop so as not to cause any problems for the "other brides". I was more than willing to make such a small concession and we set up an appointment for the following morning.

I was so excited for the rest of the day, I was worthless at work. When I went to bed I tossed and turned for hours before exhaustion finally overtook anticipation. Yet when the alarm went off at 7:00 AM, I was out of bed in a flash. I got as dressed as I dared, considering my private femme life. I shaved my legs and underarms, put on a pair of lace-trimmed panties, wiggled into my favorite side-zip girdle and attached my stockings to the garters on my girdle. Then I put on my prettiest camisole, after which I covered up all these delightful items with a shirt and pair of pants.

I was due at the bridal shop at 8:30 and got there just before then. The door was open although the "Closed" sign was in the window - just as Linda had said. I went in. I was greeted by a "Hello" from in back of the shop and walked back as a neatly dressed lady in her mid-40's came out. "Hi," I said, "I'm Jerry. I called yesterday about shopping for a bridal gown." The lady smiled and replied, "I'm Ruthanne. Linda told me you'd be coming in. She's not here yet, but why don't you come on back and we'll see if we can get started."

Ruthanne sat down with me and we discussed my general preference in styles. I told her I wanted a relatively high-necked, fitted bodice gown with long sleeves and a full skirt. We looked at a few brochures they had and I pointed out what I liked and what I didn't. "This will help a lot," Ruthanne said. "Let's go over to the gowns and start selecting ones for you to try on. Remember," she said, "size isn't important right now, so don't worry if a gown is way too big or if it's too small to even zip up."

About then Linda came into the shop. She appeared to be in her early 30's and was very nicely dressed in a blue pleated skirt and a patterned, ruffled blouse. "Hi. You must be Jerry," she said. "I'm Linda and I'm really glad you called us. We only get one or two inquiries from male-brides each year, and unfortunately most decide not to come in. Personally," she continued, "I really like helping people like you get your bridal outfits." I figured by then that she thought I was gay, but I wasn't going to mess with success and left well enough alone. Ruthanne then told her what we'd done so far and

turned me over to Linda.

We went through the racks of dresses, picking out this one and then that one. We discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each, holding them up in front of me so I could see my reflection in a mirror. I finally narrowed my selection down to seven gowns and Linda put them on a rack near the fitting rooms. "There's a hoop slip in the fitting room, Jerry," she said. "Go ahead and slip out of your pants and shirt and put on the hoops. I'll go up front and get you a bra to wear." I could hardly believe my ears! She actually wanted me in a bra! I was just tying the drawstring waist of the hoop slip when Linda popped into the fitting room with a strapless, longline bra and some falsies. "We frequently get girls in who need a little extra fullness in the bust," she said. "So I always keep some pads around to help out." She wrapped the bra around me and hooked it in back. Then she fitted the falsies into the cups and took a step back for a critical look. "I think you'll have a nice figure to fit a gown to, Jerry. Let's go ahead and try some of them on."

Linda brought in the first dress. They were all beautiful, and I didn't know how I'd ever choose the right one for me. Linda helped me get the gown over my head and slipped the sleeves onto my arms. Then she zipped the dress up the back and fluffed the train out behind me. I was just flying with excitement by then. This was beyond my wildest dreams. After all these years, here I was finally in a bridal shop, wearing a bridal gown. She had me turn in each direction to get a good look at the gown. Then with my back to the mirrors, she again straightened the train and handed me a hand-held mirror to enable me to see the back of the dress and the train in the floor-length mirror. It was a beautiful dress and about the only reason I wanted to take it off was to try on the others!

With each dress, Linda and I discussed how it looked. At her suggestion, I stepped out of the fitting room and walked around the shop in each gown to get the "feel" of it. Both Linda and Ruthanne checked out the appearance of each dress on me and gave their opinions. I looked at each gown on me in the large wall mirror to get a good idea of how I looked to someone else. Finally, I narrowed it down to just two dresses. They were somewhat similar, but just enough different. At last, after trying on each of them three times, I made my choice. "I think this one is better," I said. "It's got a bit longer bodice than the other and I really like the lace accents on it better than the other gown. I just love it on me."

Linda said, "It's definitely my favorite, too. I didn't want to say much in case you chose the other, but this dress is you!" I don't know if that's the line she gives to all brides when they make their choice, but I really thought she was being sincere. "You have the same look on your face as the other brides do when they've found

their dress, Jerry. It's kind of nice to see the same reaction on you. Now," she said, "let's see if we can find the perfect headpiece for you."

I had almost as much trouble finding the right headpiece as I did the right gown. I tended towards a Juliet cap and veil headpiece, but Linda steered me to a beautiful lace covered bandette with a finger-tip-length veil edged in lace. "We can order the bandette covered in the same lace as your gown, and we can get the lace trim on the veil the same, too," Linda told me. "It will really look perfect on you."

"You'll need to wear a bouffant petticoat under your gown," Linda said. "The hoops are nice for trying on the gowns, but they leave ridges. A petticoat also gives you a more feminine feeling as you move, especially when you're getting around to your guests at the reception. Oh, yes," she continued, "I forgot to tell you that the train fastens up to the back of your gown, too. You'll need to have your attendants help you with that before you do any dancing."

We got all the ordering information from the gown, petticoat and headpiece. Then Linda helped me out of the dress, bra and hoopslip. She made up the order as I put my shirt and pants back on, which by the way, were just awful to wear after all the gowns. Linda told me that it would be about twelve weeks until my gown would come in and that she would arrange for a lady to come in and do the alterations then. She told me to be sure to wear the girdle, bra and breast forms I would wear with the gown to my fittings, and reminded me that they had bras if I had any trouble finding what I wanted. She also said that she would order the stockings I wanted since what they carried in the store were all pantyhose.

I made my deposit on the order, with the balance due when the gown came in. Linda said she'd call as soon as it was in and I could make an appointment for my first fitting then. She told me that it usually took three fittings to get the gown "just right", and that I should plan on about an hour each for the first two fittings and about two hours for the final fitting. Before I left she asked if I'd arranged for the photographer for the wedding and gave me the names of two photographers "who would be happy to do a wedding like mine!"

So, finally, I am going to have my own, special-ordered bridal gown!! The anticipation of getting Linda's call that my gown is in is almost too much to bear. I'm really excited about the fittings, too! The whole adventure is a dream come true!!

Be Happy!

Who Is In A Name?

by
Dana Adrian

At birth my mother gave me the Christian name "Dana Adrian". As did the others of my peer group with these names, "Dana" and "Adrian" (Adriane), I spent many an hour playing with dolls. Dressing and redressing, combing soft golden hair, and daydreaming of castles, princesses and gala ball dances.

Favored still are those dusty memories. How they occupied my time and made youth sweet!

But my world was torn asunder by harsh demands. "You are a boy, act like one. Daydreams are for little girls. Think straight." My reality went to HELL and there I remained for thirty years and more.

Sweet, innocent, feminine Dana Adrian was incarcerated. With her my soul was hidden, condemned to darkest solitary confinement. Guilt lay as a wall of bricks upon us and around about us. There would be no parole from without.

I dared not let the world meet the little girl within.

On occasion Dana Adrian would breach the prison walls, and she would learn as a teen of bras and hosiery and makeup. As a young lady in her twenties she learned about loneliness derived of restrained compassion.

Now the walls are crumbling, a prison no longer. She is overcoming the fear and despair. Never again will there be a place for shame in her life.

Our life is enhanced with pleats and lace, as perfume sweetens the air around us. She brings laughter and love into our lives. We share closet space and new acquaintance, of self and many new friends. Where I was indifferent we are warm, where I was numb we now show feelings.

Surrender I my being, and she shares her universe with me. How much she will become I or I she is not certain, but again, to be without her would be my sure demise.

We are at last set free and for the first time in my thirty-six years I am alive.

Who is in a name? "Dana Adrian" and "I" are.

(Reprinted from Fiesta Chapter News Letter, June 1990)

TriEss Chapters & Forming Groups

(NOTE: Those chapters with no mailing address may be contacted through the TriEss office at P. O. Box 194, Tulare, CA 93275)

ALPHA: Charlene (CA1018D) Charlene Day, PO 3501, Arcadia, CA 91006

ALPHA OMEGA: Jennifer (OH2539H), PO 954, Elyria, Ohio 44036

ALPHA RHO: Catherline (UT2514B) PO 26711, Salt Lake City, UT 84126

ALPHA ZETA, Dianne or Terry, PO Box 24459, Tempe, AZ 85285

BETA CHI: Lee Frances, PO 31253, Jackson, Miss. 39206

CHI: Deanna (IL1155B) PO 40, Wood Dale, IL 60191

CHI CHI CHI: PO 194 Tulare, CA 93275

CHI DELTA MU Charlene (NY1756C) PO 477, Co-Op Stn. Bronx, NY 10475

DELTA OMEGA Tina (TX2447S) PO 1021, Arlington, TX 76004

IOTA ALPHA: Beverly (IA 1615 B) PO 75, Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

IOTA EPSILON: Lynnette or Kay, D. Martin PO 245, W. Covina, CA 91793

LAMBDA IOTA: Joann (NY1816M) PO 121, Ozone Park, NY 11416

NU OMICRON PHI: Judy (FCCAN2315K) PO 7421, Vanier, ON K1K8E4 Canada

PHI: Kathy (ABQ NewMexico)

PHI EPSILON MU Denise Snyder, C.F.S. PO 3261, Winter Park, FL 32790

PHI SIGMA: Sara (FCCan2465G) PO 2546, Medicine Hat AB T1A8G8, Canada

RHO CHI RHO June (NE2070H) PO 24060, Omaha, NE 68124

SIGMA EPSILON Julie (NC2241A) PO 339, Helena, AL 35080

SIGMA NU RHO: Dorothy (NJ1286G) PO 9255, Trenton, NJ 08650

TAU CHI: Melanie Thorn PO 1105, Alief, TX 77411

THETA OMEGA GAMMA: Miranda (MI1256B)

TRI DELTA CHI: Lee (LA2460D) PO 870213, New Orleans, LA 70187

KAPPA BETA: Julie (NC2241A) PO 12101, Charlotte, NC 28220

(The following groups may be contacted in care of the leader shown by way of the mail forwarding service of TriEss Headquarters at PO 194, Tulare, CA 93275.)

Tuscon, AZ	Brenda (AZ2856D)
Sacramento, CA	Kay (CA1542M)
San Jose, CA	Rose Ann (CA1074C)
Washington DC	Cathi (DC2075M) or Gloria Ann
(MD1474W)	

Jacksonville, FL	Stephanie (FL2447R) or Stephanie
	(FL2581M)

Pensacola, FL	Joan (FL2520B)
St. Petersburg, FL	Samantha (FL2402D)

Moscow, Idaho	Laurie (ID1704W)
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Topeka, KS	Vicky (KS1742K)
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Wichita, KS	Julie (KS2294K)
-------------	-----------------

Baltimore, MD	Diane (MD2633P)
---------------	-----------------

Minneapolis, MN	Salli (MN1560B)
-----------------	-----------------

St. Louis, MO	Rani (MO1693D)
---------------	----------------

Niagra Falls, NY	Joan (NY2354C)
------------------	----------------

Toledo, OH	Joyce (OH1449B) or Rhonda
	(2499M)

Eugene, OR	Debra Kim (OR11731K)
------------	----------------------

Gouldsboro PA	Sue (PA2164C)
---------------	---------------

Florence, SC	Julie (NC2241A)
--------------	-----------------

Memphis, TN	Tomaslina (TN2198H)
-------------	---------------------

Knoxville, TN	Lori (TN2402M)
---------------	----------------

Amarillo, TX	Sally (TX2831F)
--------------	-----------------

Richmond, VA	Christina (VA2550S)
--------------	---------------------

Charleston, WV	Alona (WV1730M)
----------------	-----------------

Montreal, Canada	Yvette (FC PQ2168D)
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So. British Col. Canada	Dana (FCBC1229H)
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(Ladies.... If we are in error (and we know we make errors) or have left you out, please advise the editorial staff in care of: JR Consulting, 402 Hildred, Conroe, TX 77301. We'll try our best to be more accurate next time. Thanx J



GENDER ALTERNATIVES LEAGUE BEING FORMED

The Gender Alternatives League is now being formed. At present, it is a small organization. It has no officers, no directors, and only a handful of members. There are no funds to keep it afloat. We hope to change all of this — in fact, the gender community is ready for a change!

GAL consists of the seeds of your ideas. The time is **NOW** for the Gender Community to bring those seeds into fruition. There has been talk. Now there is action!

It is our goal to promote freedom of gender expression.

It is our intention to become the national dissemination network, the political activist organization, and the social watchdog promoting freedom of choice for those wishing a gender alternative and the removal of the stigma of mental derangement.

It is our primary purpose to help and support the gender community as a whole in the area of educational and political activism. GAL will in no way usurp any of the programs, ideas or purposes of any other gender organization, but will instead channel and enhance the ability of all organizations to have the clout necessary to advance their best interests within the society at large. In working together, we can achieve what individuals only dream of. Whether you are a crossdresser, a transvestite, transsexual (male to female or female to male), a transgenderist, a helping professional, a supportive other (as a wife, friend, parent, or associate), it does not matter. As long as you are in the Gender Community or connected to the Gender Community in some way we are here to help and support **YOU**.

It is our intention to bring all members of the gender community together as one unified group, regardless of the labels or differences between us, for the betterment of our community as a whole, and for the betterment of all individuals within it. We, acting together, can create a large enough force to make a difference.

It is also our intention to join forces with any other groups fighting the same or similar injustices or resolving to achieve the same or similar goals on both a national and an international level.

It is our intention to become a watchdog for the community and to root out the notion that the gender community is a small group of individuals and organizations that through some 'mental illness' are practicing something 'abnormal'. We do what we do because we enjoy it and because it is our 'personal preference'. There is nothing immoral or abnormal about it. We hurt no one. The pain those close to us feel because of our preferences is not brought on by what we do, but by the stigma placed on our choice by the mental health organizations and those people in our society who cannot tolerate freedom of choice.

It is our intention to provide gender education and understanding to society and to remove Transgenderism from DSMIII and other psychiatric manuals as a category of 'mental illness', which it is not.

It is our intention to promote, and assure the betterment of those professionals and paraprofessionals who, through interest, education, and understanding, help promote our welfare, not only through their support but also through their dissemination of the truth about us. On the other hand, we intend to back away from those organizations who would insist on making our members suffer distress by promoting the mental illness theory to us and to those we love, and by whom we desire to be loved. Simply saying that we are mentally ill and having no cure helps no one. It hurts everyone. Simply saying we are mentally ill when the facts prove otherwise does nothing but degrade and defame the individuals of our community and our family members and friends. We are in fact, victims of ignorance. Unlike victims, however, we will do something to change the ignorance and intentional or unintentional misrepresentation of our situation wherever it is found. We will turn the tides to our favor rather than allow misunderstanding, bigotry and hate to rule society.

It is our intention to make correct information about gender alternatives available to anyone in any public library in any community in the United States or elsewhere, and to have old and false perceptions of our situation removed. False information about individuals or groups can be removed from public institutions such as libraries if the facts show the information is old, inaccurate, or bigoted.

It is our intention to show that much of the information available in libraries is old and inaccurate. Additionally, it is our intention to have old and inaccurate information removed, or those portions that are incorrect rubber stamped with references to current information on the subject.

It is our intention to notify anyone who, through some misconception, intentional or unintentional bigotry or misinformation, perpetuates and disseminates lies, that those "facts" are erroneous and cause pain and damage to the lives and reputations of other human beings.

It is our intention to locate any bad publicity and bigoted or prejudiced information about the transgender community and eradicate it at its source, as well as make its source the subject of public viewing.

It is our intention to remove from distribution those publications which would promote gender alternatives as an aberrant sexual life style by simply not participating in or purchasing their material.

It is our intention to have bigotry, hate, hate groups, racism, etc., placed into the DSM and other psychiatric manuals as a mental illness.

The idea and need for this type of format to back the community in general is what is needed at this time. We are ready! Women's Liberation and Gay Rights have accomplished much through their endeavors and activism. In the '90s the Gender Community will reach for and achieve the same or similar goals.

We are in need of leaders. We need volunteers for all posts in this organization. We need a person from each national transgender organization to become a part of the board of directors of GAL. We need a member of each local organization throughout the US to become an integral part of GAL in their local area for the purpose of dissemination to the membership and the general public, as well as for the purpose of keeping the national officers informed about what is needed, wanted, and being gained on the local front.

We need each of you to be a watchdog and know what is going on around you and report to the watchdog committee any and all discrepancies in our society that

cause us, as a minority, to suffer undue, unethical and possibly illegal discrimination as a group or as individuals.

We need each and every one of you to act in unison when such an occurrence hampers one or more of our sisters or brothers or causes us as a community undue distress. This organization will field those occurrences and put the injustices on the platform and handle them.

A few people with goals and aspirations are not enough. Yes, a few can start the ball rolling, but the few will tire and be unable to cover the ground many can cover. Yes, we need leaders, committee members, and general membership and support. We need not only monetary support but ideas and a willingness to take action when necessary. We need you!

It is estimated that approximately one to three percent of the population enjoys wearing the clothing of the other gender. If that estimate is correct, we are 2.5 to 7.5 million strong. We cannot possibly reach all of those people at this time since many are in the closet and will not even hear about GAL. Eventually, we can reach every segment of the population and make sure everyone knows there are many many others out there and it is OK to join us. For those of us connected now, we need action now!

First and foremost we need each and every one of you and all your friends in the gender community to write down your ideas, your concepts, your comments, and send them to us now. We want to know what you need now.

Where we go from here depends on you and your input. Do you need GAL? If this is the last you hear of GAL, it will be because the apathy in our community has made it so. If, on the other hand, GAL succeeds as an organization it will be because you have made it so. Write to us NOW.

Your (our) first test of resolve will be communication of your interests. WE need to hear from all of you and all your friends NOW.

GAL
PO Box 3392
Napa, CA 94558

National News

From The Chariman Of The Board Of Directors (Interim)

Jane Ellen Fairfax, Interim Chairman of the Tri-Ess Board of Directors, reports that nine Regional Coordinators for Chapter Development have now been appointed. There are eight Coordinators for the United States plus an International Coordinator. (Please see page 27 for a list of the Regional Coordinators and the states for which each is responsible.) The Regional Coordinators serve under Marlene, the Director of Chapter Development, and are responsible for assisting Chapters and Forming Groups in their Regions. Sisters, if you could use some help in forming a chapter or some new ideas for chapter activities, you now have some one to help you that is a proven leader in your own region of the country.

Patricia, Coordinator for the Mid-Continental Region, is putting together a Handbook on Chapter Formation that will be a valuable resource for new and established chapters.

Shirley Kay of New Mexico is one of two wives on the Tri-Ess Board of Directors, and was appointed Director for Wives and Partners Concerns at the Board of Directors meeting in Boston. Shirley is working on a directory, newsletter, and mail forwarding service for wives and partners. She has asked each chapter to select a wife or partner to serve as that chapter's liaison to her office. Her new mailing address is:

c/o Fiesta Chapter
DeVargas Center, Suite G-451
Santa Fe, NM 87501-1498

Donna Mobley, Tri-Ess Communications Director, has recently relocated to San Antonio, Texas. Her new mailing address is:

P.O. Box 13085
San Antonio, TX 78213

Donna Martin, Tri-Ess Membership Director, reminds us of the new membership categories:

Single	\$35.00 per year
Couple	\$50.00 per year
Associates	\$35.00 per year
Life Member (single)	\$500.00 one time fee
Life Member (couple)	\$700.00 one time fee

Wives or partners who wish to join may do so at any time by submitting the additional \$15.00 dues and a profile (photo optional) to Donna Martin at:

P.O. Box 245
West Covina, CA 91793

According to Carol Beecroft, Executive Director, the Tri-Ess Membership Directory will now be produced by members of Chi Chapter of Chicago. Chi Chapter has for years produced a chapter membership directory of high quality. They have the personnel and the experience to carry out this vital task for the benefit of all Tri-Ess members.

The Tri-Ess Board of Directors now numbers its constitutional maximum of 21 with the appointment of new Board Members Samantha Wells of Texas, Beverly Wayne of Iowa, Joan Goodnight and Kymberleigh Richards of California, and Patricia of Colorado. Diane Ingram of Arizona, Coordinator of last year's Holiday En Femme, has resigned from the Board to devote time to family and career concerns.

This year's Holiday En Femme is scheduled November 14 -18 in Houston, Texas. See separate article and registration information on page 18.

My Love

My wife accepts me as I am
Both as a gal and as a man
Our life together is very sweet
Her accepting me is a real treat
She loves me when I am a man
She loves me when I am who I am
Together we shall always be
The one of her and the two of me

-Donna NY-1634-H

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Regional Coordinators for Chapter Development

Region 1- New England States (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut,

Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey)

Coordinator: Lynda Frank, P.O. Box 9192, Morristown, NJ 07960

Region 2 - Middle Atlantic and Ohio Valley (Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky,

Pennsylvania, Michigan and Washington, D.C.)

Coordinator: Jennifer Higgins, P.O. 954, Elyria, OH 44036

Region 3- The Southeast (Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Tennessee)

Coordinator: Julie Alexander, P.O. Box 4426, Cary, NC 27519

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Recipe for a Happy Relationship

by Linda

Are you having trouble telling your wife you are a crossdresser? Or, have you told her and she just won't accept or understand?

A lot of us operate on the "Bubba in a dress" theory. We want to be our "Good Old Boy" selves and wear dresses, makeup and high heels. The crossdresser who feels this way is still in the closet and using dressing as a sexual outlet. He is not looking past dressing to his inner self; not letting his feminine self have the expression she needs. You need to earn the right to be feminine. You cannot tell your wife, "I want to wear a dress, but I want you to continue to wait on me and do as I say, as if I were still in male clothes."

My wife treats me, when I am dressed, as the woman I want to appear as. "How wonderful," you say. "I wish I could get my wife to do the same for me." Ah.....but this didn't happen overnight. I earned the privilege. I took some of the household tasks my wife hated to do and did them. I try to help in every way I can to lighten her load. We make decisions together. I treat her as the lady she is, and she treats me likewise, because she knows this makes me happy.

Let me suggest a simple, sure-fire scheme to help your wife be more understanding than she is. (To do this, she must know you are a crossdresser, and be a little understanding.)

The next Saturday you have a day off, don't play golf or go out with the boys; give your wife some extra money and tell her to go shopping...for herself...all day. Insist on all day. While she is gone, clean the house. I don't mean dust it in your sexiest outfit. I mean clean it. You know how to do it and probably can do as good a job as she can. (Cleaning house is hard, heavy work.) Then cook her dinner. Surely you have a dish she likes, or one she can learn to like. I assure you, when she returns she will look at you in a different light. Do not bring up the dressing issue then. In fact, don't mention it at all. The next week tell her you will help her clean, and you will do the hardest part. Tell her this makes you feel closer to her and brings out your feminine side. From this understanding can spring increased acceptance.

Some women, of course, want to be the only woman in the house. This takes a great deal of patience to overcome, and only you can decide if the best course is to go to the motel on the weekends to dress all by your lonesome, or to keep trying to reach an understanding.

Remember, all this really rests with you. If you want to be treated a certain way, you have to act a certain way.....it's up to you!

(Reprinted from Cross Currents, March 1990)

A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

BY

GLORIA SUE TRENTON

OH-2751-M

About two years ago I was a very troubled person. I was 38 years old, and had been a crossdresser for over thirty of those years. I was also in the process of a divorce that was hurting me very deeply. Although my wife of 9 1/2 years had known about my crossdressing before we got married, she had decided she couldn't live with it anymore. And although it was tearing me apart, I couldn't blame her.

Before we got married we had gone to the libraries, contacted Tri-Ess, and got other information for both of us. She had a lot of questions, and some information we got was helpful. But so much was very negative, or useless. The fantasy type articles really were bad news to her. She didn't need or want a cheerleader, just someone to understand her plight, and so did I. But there just didn't seem to be anyone to help at the time.

We loved each other, so we tried it on our own. We got married and I dressed at times, sometimes too much for her, but we worked it out as best we could. After several months, however, she said she couldn't take it anymore, so I stopped. It was one of several purges over the years, but this time I was determined.

I had always been one who held everything inside. All the guilt, fear, pain and frustration would explode after a time, though, and heaven help everyone when that happened. Sadly, over the years it had always been the ones I loved the most that received the brunt of my rage.

We had a marriage, and we did love each other, but it changed. The crossdressing returned, as it always had in the past, and we had many problems with it.

We had been married for about six years when I purged again. Our physical relations were down to nothing and had been for quite a while, but I was so afraid of losing her, I had to try again. I gained weight; I grew a moustache and then a beard. I got rid of everything that was a reminder, except that part inside me that would not go away.

For almost three years I held the purge, but nothing really changed in our relationship. The temper showed itself more frequently, until finally I told her I couldn't do it anymore. She knew I wasn't trying to hurt her in any way, but I told her I had to start dressing again, and that I couldn't stop.

Six months later, over coffee one morning, she

told me she had to have a divorce. She told me she had seen a psychiatrist about her feelings, and she had told him about my crossdressing. She told me then that for several years I really hadn't been a man to her, because in her mind's eye - even during my three year purge, and the beard and everything - she said that all she could see when she looked at me was a woman, and she wanted out. Her psychiatrist's great advice to her had been, "Either live with it or get a divorce," and the divorce was her choice.

I argued for counseling, and that I could quit again, but she said she knew I couldn't quit, and she didn't want to see me hurt anymore. It took me a while, but I didn't want her to be hurt anymore either, and I understood that she was only doing what she needed to do for both of us.

Little by little I started putting my life back together again and facing being single, but I had to have help, and badly. I found after much looking the address of Alpha Omega in Elyria, Ohio, not too far from me, and I also found the address for Tri-Ess again. I wrote to both and in my own way begged for help. The two weeks that followed were perhaps the longest time I have ever known. I was desperate.

I received a letter from Tanya from the Alpha Omega group, and I know I'll never be able to describe the feeling of joy, excitement, and relief that I experienced. After 38 years I wasn't "alone" anymore.

Tanya and I wrote several letters back and forth, and began talking to each other on the phone. "Ole What's Her Name" may not realize it, but she saved my life. If she hadn't been there, I don't know what would have happened.

I was like a child again. After a lot of thought I chose a name, a name that has a lot of deep meaning to me, and Gloria was born.

I had an interview to become a member of Alpha Omega with Tanya and Janet as their male selves. I drove like a maniac to get there, because I was running late, and I was afraid I'd get there and they would have left. But they were there, and although, being in a public restaurant, all the proper social etiquette was observed, inside of me I was laughing and crying with joy, and I wanted to hug them to pieces. Besides, I was scared to death. For the first time in my life I was meeting someone like me, and as I told my story, and we talked, I finally got to where I could hold a cup of coffee without

shaking like a leaf.

December 1988 Gloria met the world at the Alpha Omega Christmas Party, and has, since then, met some truly wonderful people. I owe so much to each and every member of Alpha Omega, and I hope someday perhaps I can help someone to feel better about themselves.

Gloria has ventured into public a few times, and although I hesitate to say she passed, at least she didn't have any problems on her excellent adventures. My friend Diane, as her male self, has been with me on most of these adventures, and I appreciate the time she as spent to help me.

About a year ago I met a very beautiful and caring woman, and we started seeing each other and dating. I soon found myself in the position that if our relationship were to become serious, she would have to know about Gloria.

Debbie, the librarian for Alpha Omega at that time, was very helpful in finding and making copies of several articles in regard to wives and girlfriends of crossdressers. So one night, armed with these articles, a picture of Gloria that Diane had taken, and a whole lot of trepidation, I told Kathleen about Gloria.

We talked for several hours, and she listened, and read all the articles, and she saw Gloria's picture. If we were to have a relationship, I didn't want my crossdressing to be something that would hurt her. I felt better prepared this time to try to explain about me. Needless to say we talked many other times. This remarkable woman at least cared to try and understand, and finally she met Gloria. Again we talked for quite a while.

I told her about my group, and about my past, the good and the bad. I asked two things of her. First, to try to keep an open mind and see the person inside the clothes, and second, to try to have fun with it and not take it so forebodingly, as crossdressing was something I enjoyed doing. Too often when talking about crossdressing, we become so serious you'd think it was

a funeral dirge, instead of being something we enjoy and have fun with. The positive and negative sides both need to be talked about, and both aspects need to be shared.

In October of 1989 Kathleen and I were married. Kathleen attended her first Alpha Omega meeting in November, and was very scared, as we all were at our first meeting. However, by the end of the evening she had had a good time, and enjoyed herself.

Again, I credit Tanya and our group president Jennifer for their help. Kathleen had been interviewed by these two caring people about a month before this, and they had helped a lot to make her at ease. Also, my friend Diane, as her male self, had met Kathleen, because she knew we usually went to the meetings together. Kathleen commented that everyone had made her feel welcome, and that made me feel good.

Kathleen and I talk a lot, and I don't want to sound like I'm boasting, but she has been wonderful. I am so proud of her! We still have our everyday problems, and sometimes problems with the crossdressing, but we talk and compromise and work things out. She will never be a "Cheerleader" about my crossdressing, and she does wish it didn't exist, but she also understands it as a part of my life, and cares enough to help me and others when we need someone to talk to.

Kathleen has been asked by our group to be our representative for the Wives and Partners Concerns group that Tri-Ess is starting, and I know she will do her best to share her thoughts and experiences.

I am also the new librarian for Alpha Omega Chapter, and I have a lot of material to sort through. I would appreciate hearing from some of the other groups' librarians, for thoughts on how to do this important job, and also to see if perhaps we may be able to exchange books, tapes, or articles to help each other.

I will close now by saying that, with the help of some very dear friends, and a very remarkable woman, my life has changed so much in the last two years, it is hard to believe. I owe a debt of life that I may never be able to repay, but I will try. 

CP

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WRITE FOR OUR CATALOG

A VISIT WITH THE DOCTOR

BY

RICHARD F. DOCTER, PhD

BEHAVIOR AT CROSSDRESSING CONVENTIONS

If my memory is correct, the first major cross dressing gathering was held in upstate New York in the fall of 1960 or 1961. Perhaps about 70 people attended, most of them cross dressers and their wives. At least two sex researchers attended, one of whom later wrote a less than enthusiastic article titled "Alice's Journey Into Wonderland." The other, Dr. Wardell Pomeroy who was an associate of Dr. Alfred Kinsey, is reported to have taken some 16mm film footage.

During the past thirty years there have been many well-attended national meetings designed mainly for TVs with a scattering of TSs or prospective TSs in attendance. Fantasia Fair, established by Ariadne Kane, is in its fifteenth year. Dream was an Oregon event which only met twice at Lincoln City. There have been numerous weekend and four-day parties sponsored by various persons and organizations mainly along the eastern seaboard and along the gulf coast.

A few cross dressing clubs sponsor their own retreats which are more or less semi-private, but which often include a sprinkling of TVs and perhaps a wife or two from some other part of the nation.

Tri Ess has sponsored several national conventions as has IFGE and other umbrella organizations. One of the best attended conventions, now in its eighth year, is the Be All You Can Be Weekend. This has been put on through the combined efforts of clubs in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Pittsburg. Another popular weekend is the Texas Tea Party which celebrated its second very successful national event last February. IFGE will be in Denver next Spring and California Dreamin' will attempt to become the first successful cross dressing in-gathering for southern California. Just after Halloween, you can attend what I believe will be a very interesting and well planned four day event in Kansas City.

But what do people actually do at these events? Talk? Listen to lectures? Practice the feminine presentation skills? Indulge themselves with wig purchases and the latest in high technology fingernails? Yes, all of these fun activities and much more.

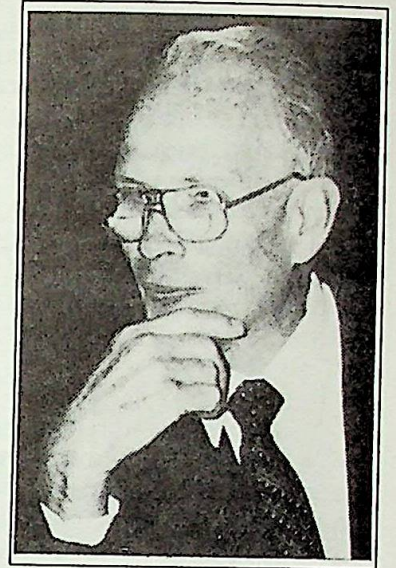
Here are a few observations and impressions of the kinds of behaviors I've seen at eight of these national conventions. Perhaps we can attempt to capture the patterns of behavior by identifying some groups. Here is a start.

Organizers and leaders.

The hard-working leaders who organize and conduct these meetings are surely appreciated but perhaps not enough. Some of them pay an unrecognized price for their willingness to step out of the role of Pricilla, Beatrice or Lana and take on the many chores of making an event work. The cost is this. When you have to do all the operational work of registration, record keeping, assigning space, meeting unexpected changes, dealing with late registrations or other novel problems, it may be impossible to sustain the femme role. Some leaders, then, sacrifice their own convention enjoyment for the good of others. The more basic point is that we can only function in one gender role at a time. Fantasy and a little pushing back of the constraints of reality are not in harmony with having to get a job done. Thank you, all you organizers and leaders, for the work you do!

Socializers.

Most attendees spend most of their time interacting with other cross dressers, comparing feelings and issues, sharing anecdotes and common experiences of the past, and generally being part of a support network. This is the essence of what makes a convention fun for most. There is plenty of time to call upon the various vendors and check out the latest products to enhance one's feminine image. Perhaps half of the socializers enjoy attending the formal sessions and seminars while the other half follow their own agenda. But socializers tend to remain mainly within the closet-like boundaries of the convention hotel. When they do venture out it is under the planned guidance of a tour guide. The least confident of TVs can feel quite at home while in the company of 100 other cross dressers no matter where the tour leads. (We enjoyed a great riverboat cruise and dinner in Pittsburg and



lunches and city tours in Chicago and San Antonio.

Performing artists.

For the most part, attire at conventions is more or less non-competitive, but a few of the ladies enjoy functioning as performing artists. That is, they favor wearing outfits which some of the other participants view as remarkable, even unique. Since a major purpose of these meetings is to allow individuals to dress pretty much as they please, there is ample latitude for the performing artists. Perhaps the most common outfits likely to attract a second look, even from very experienced TVs, are the exaggerated "hooker look" and heavy duty S & M attire worn before lunch. Hats at breakfast also get a bit of attention, but some are most tasteful. Other performing artists are more conventional, such as one participant who favors elegant specially made and historically correct victorian dresses.

Loners.

A few attendees find a way out of their own introversion and shyness through cross dressing. It is as if they wear a suit of armor which protects them from the imminent fear of social failure. While cross dressed they are able to practice social skills which have been difficult to learn in their masculine role. I can not recall seeing a single convention attender isolated and alone at one of these meetings. The festive and accepting culture which permeates the event helps to make everyone feel welcome. But there are always a few of us who are less confident than others, so it's up to all the rest to help any potential loners take as active a role in the affairs of the weekend as they feel comfortable doing.

Outreachers.

The outreachers have a special mission. They enjoy meeting citizens who have nothing to do with the convention, and spending time educating them concerning the intricacies of the gender scene (whatever that really is). This may be done in the convention bar and it often is, but it may be more interesting to set out on a bar hopping tour. A cross dressed person may become an instant celebrity in most bars throughout the United States, and experimentation with this opportunity delights the outreachers. If by chance or skill, the outreachers meet someone who finds her attractive and delightful, the fun is enhanced.

Endurance winners.

One of the most remarkable features of any cross dressing convention is the physical stamina of the participants. Somehow, some of our attendees appear to function day after day, night after night, with little or no sleep. Yes, this is an exaggeration, but only a

slight exaggeration. The endurance winners are those who remain in the lobby, the meeting rooms or the bar for many hours after midnight and who show no evidence of fatigue or any motivation for sleep.

No doubt you have some additional observations of patterns of behavior you've seen at conventions, so please drop me a note explaining your view and I will compile a more complete listing of these in the future.

I have had an opportunity to spend some wonderful hours with wives at these conventions, and some of these nice folks have become good friends. Here are a few rough and ready comments pertaining to wives.

Inundation.

It is easy for some wives to feel inundated in the cross dressing scene when they are confronted with 200 men wearing dresses. If the goal is to have your wife (or significant other) feel as comfortable as possible and to enjoy the meetings, it is vital to think about giving her some relief from your source of joy. For example, make a careful estimate of your wife's feelings about showing up at the convention. If this is a first-time experience, do you think it is wise to insist upon driving or flying dressed? Is it a good idea to have her fly separately then have you pick her up at the air terminal dressed? Is she ready to live with you in a hotel room with four days of continuous cross dressing, including all opportunities for conversation, meals, and visits with friends? Why not afford her a little relief now and then?

Beware of running a good thing into the ground. I've spoken with wives who were so fed up with cross dressing after a few days that they said they would never come to another convention. The key idea, of course, is to find ways to make the convention experience more of a joy for your wife. How does she enjoy spending a vacation? How much privacy does she enjoy? With whom does she wish to interact? (A few highly perceptive TVs have actually changed back into their regular clothes during a convention and taken their wife out for dinner.)

Wives only meetings.

TVs correctly anticipate that when wives get together they will discuss their dissatisfactions with cross dressing or with their husbands. Once I was asked by a well meaning husband to try to head off such discussion by the wives "because we have to live with it after the weekend is over." This gentleman was clearly off the track, for the frank expression of concerns among wives is the healthiest of activities.

Wives attending meetings with other wives soon

learn of common interests, worries and concerns. More importantly, they learn of the tactics and beliefs which have contributed to problem solving within marriages. Sometimes you hear of a wife who had assumed no solutions existed for certain kinds of difficulties, only to learn from other wives of several negotiated solutions.

I hate it.

Occasionally a wife will express intense resentment concerning her husband's cross dressing and this will extend to a suspicion that some other wives may try to convince her to believe otherwise. But most wives I've met realize that no amount of selling or preaching will have the slightest effect upon deeply held beliefs. We all treasure and defend our most strongly held preferences and when the subject matter is tinged with sexual feelings, these beliefs may never change much. Perhaps one of the most important function of wives meetings is that they allow each person to experiment with the expression of honest feelings, openly expressed, in a supportive and understanding atmosphere. For some, it is through such expression and through the friendship of others that new ideas for finding ways to address conflicts can be found.

Would you like to add something to these observations and comments? I'd like to hear from you. Please write:

Richard F. Docter, Ph.D.
California State University
Department of Psychology - SS 310
Northridge, CA 91330

----- **Missing TVias Found**

We are very grateful to Victoria Albin of San Francisco for coming up with four volumes of Transvestia needed to fill out a collection in the library of California State University, Northridge. Victoria has been a careful and thorough collector over the years and she will be donating some additional volumes of Transvestia for our use. Thanks so much, Victoria.

One other unusual item has been promised. It is an extensive diary and journal of a life-long cross dresser. His widow had read my book and noted that longitudinal studies of cross dressing have seldom been reported. It is her wish that this material may contribute to a more complete understanding of cross dressing.

If you have books, journals, collections of newspaper clippings, historic newsletter collections or other materials of research interest that you may wish to donate please contact Dr. Docter.

Femininity

Beauty is the fluttering of butterfly wings
Midst the flowers that bloom in the field,

An orchard alive with rows of green sentries
Adorned with their fruitful yield.

A symphony heralded by nature's musicians
Brings glory to ears, though they bear no words;

The violin drone of laborious bees,
The flutish warblings of harlequin birds

All offer their tribute to Him who conducts all.

Beauty is vision to view the sweet rose
Vibrant and warm in bright rays of sun,

Queenly, serene in evening repose,
Slumbering softly when day's work is done.

The playful brook, the placid lake, the
sunset aglow in the sands,

Have all been set into this setting of awe
By His most tender hands.

Yes, all these marvelous wonderous gifts
The Creator sculptured with love,

But there's yet another with glory so divine,
That poets, writers, and sage men of wisdom

Could never ever even begin to define.

With reverence I whisper her most precious name,
And I know that you will agree,

That there can be no more precious a gem
Than the jewel of FEMININITY.

-June Renault

Wither Tri-Ess ?

I was very fortunate to be able to attend the Tri-Ess convention in San Francisco last November. What a thrill it was to go shopping in classy ladies' stores, get my nails done, learn makeup from Jim Bridges, lunch in a little tea shop, eat at the best restaurants and most importantly, meet a lot of very fine and friendly people! The whole experience was fun, beginning with the trip to Alcatraz and ending up at St. Patrick's for 6:30 A.M. Mass Sunday. There was even excitement afterwards at the hotel when a helicopter dropped its cargo. Yes, it was an experience I will fondly remember forever.

But there was something serious going on during the convention, too. One of the important agenda items for the convention was where Tri-Ess is going and how it should be organized. There was a series of workshops dealing with these questions. Sadly, I missed these workshops, as the opportunity to explore stores, tea shops, etc., was just too much to resist. It was an opportunity that I always dreamed about. When I had the opportunity to have that dream fulfilled, I just could not confine myself to a little room, no matter how important the meetings were.

I began to think that even though I did miss those workshops, perhaps my thoughts could be of some small interest. Like everyone else, I would like to express my ideas about our fine organization.

The item I think most important is the notion that "closed" group members "move up" to "open" groups when those members mature or gain experience. This idea seems to be shared by many, even by some whom we would call influential in Tri-Ess. "Closed" groups are the "bunny hills" for one to try her skis before going onto the "expert hills" - the "open" groups. I think that view is dangerous and self-defeating. If it continues to any significant degree, it could doom Tri-Ess. Let's face it - no one wants to remain in the Jr. Varsity when the "Varsity" beckons. No, "open" does not flow to "closed" or vice versa. They are parallel and equal. They just have different orientations.

The basic difference I see is that the "closed" groups are oriented towards the individual and her relationships towards people around her rather than towards gender problems or issues. This is not to say that gender issues are not a concern to "closed" groups but that they are not the prime focus, as are people and family relationships. I believe there is a family orientation to the "closed" groups. Since families generally have a

religious concern, I think that aspect ought to be a concern to the "closed" groups as well. Accordingly, I thought it was odd that some time was not scheduled for our sisters to fulfill their religious needs on Sunday. And it would have been helpful if some of the local religious services had been listed even if time was not scheduled for them.

I would like to stray a little here. For different reasons we crossdressers tend to be religio-phobic. I suppose part of that is due to the Bible thumpers who are ready to hurl us into fire and damnation. And maybe part of this feeling could be due to having a bad experience with clerical friends. But there is no reason that we should ever allow anyone or any kind of experience to come between us and our God whoever S/He may be. If we are going to be complete and whole, we must foster our spirituality as well as our femininity and hold dear those spiritual values that have sustained us for so long. If we truly want to be accepted by society, we must embrace the values of the society as much as we are able. The hallmarks of those values are religion and morality. We cannot ignore those values or belittle them and still expect acceptance. **"WE MUST BLEND."** Bear in mind that we are already bending one value - the dress code - by our crossdressing; we should not irritate society any further. At our functions we should be ever mindful of those spiritual values and provide an atmosphere where they can thrive.

Since I have already discussed the "closed" groups previously, I would like to finish this comparison with "open" groups, which I see as being more oriented towards gender problems rather than towards interpersonal relationships. The main concern, however, is the relationship of the individual towards gender problems. Depending upon the membership of the group, the individual can get lost or pushed in directions she would rather not go. Part of that may be due to the diverse membership of "open" groups and the mindsets that diversity tends to bring. "Open" groups tend to go towards the perverse much easier than do "closed" groups. They are simply not particularly family oriented. A good test would be to poll our GF friends to see in which group they would feel more comfortable.

Accordingly, I feel the debate that goes on about "open" vs. "closed" is really a non-argument and serves no useful purpose. All we are really doing is arguing over which is better, apples or oranges. And who really cares? Why can't each person belong to the group in which she feels most comfortable? The "open"/"closed" debate is divisive and solves nothing. And it comes at a

time when all of us crossdressers should be pulling together for our common good. We have enough problems to work on without all the flack of this non-argument.

It may seem that I am condemning "open" groups. Nothing could be further from the truth. I belong to both types of groups and seem to function well in both. But I just feel more comfortable in our local "closed" group rather than our "open" group. Most of my friends are in the "closed" group, an "open" group that tends to be a little more selective, or a small selected segment of an "open" group. We as members of Tri-Ess just need to dispense with the notion that "closed" groups are just big closets whereas one "flies" in the "open" groups. That simply is not true. Whether one "flies" or not depends strictly on the individual and not the group.

Now having given you my considerable (?) opinion concerning "open" and "closed", what do I think about Tri-Ess? I would like to make the following observations:

1. The orientation of the chapters should be towards the feminine. I would think if we are going to dress as women to express our innate femininity, then we should act and think more in that direction. Our meetings and socials should be feminine. I have a problem with poker parties, beer busts, sports and other masculine pursuits as chapter functions. We should be more into teas, bridge, fashions, cooking, sewing, cosmetics, makeup, etc. The other activities can be pursued when we are in our masculine attire.

2. The GF's around us should be full members regardless of whether or not they are attached to someone within the group. We do not necessarily need to recruit them but we should not discourage them. Always we should give them a warm welcome. After all, who knows best how to be feminine? The crossdresser or the GF? Accordingly, I believe the GF's ought to be active in the group as much as possible. These fine ladies can create the feminine atmosphere so necessary for us to express our femininity. Also, I think we ought to recruit and encourage "associate" members who are willing to accommodate us in such areas as electrolysis, fashions, beauty, therapy, etc.

3. At our meetings, our GF's and associates ought to be treated royally. But are they really? I have seen meetings where the crossdressers sit down and the GF's serve. Our GF's and associates should be sitting and we crossdressers should be doing all the social chores. Not only are these people members but they are also our mentors. Let's treat them like the experts they are and give them time to impart to each of us crossdressers their knowledge and wisdom of womanhood.

4. We should be supportive and helpful to all our members. All of us are striving to express our femininity

as well as we can. We should remember that we who pride ourselves on our skills and courage were once as afraid and inexperienced as our new sisters. A little patience and forbearance would help to cement the bonds of sisterhood. We should applaud and rejoice in their milestones regardless of how small they may seem to us. Let's make each sister feel good about herself.

5. We should provide for the wives and partners an environment that allows them to express their feelings and enables them to deal with what is going on. Let us be sensitive to their needs. After all, we have enough trouble understanding ourselves. Far too much emphasis is placed on the crossdresser. The chapters should try within reasonable limits to preserve marital, family, and religious relationships that might be stressed because of our crossdressing. Incidentally, is there any golden rule against having a "straight" function once in a while to let our GF friends be women among their men for a change?

6. And finally, the chapter should provide networking for the member and be a source of friends, information and activities. One of the major problems all of us have is a lack of means to talk about our crossdressing activities. We need someone with whom we can giggle about some of our faux pas, delight in some of our adventures, talk about some fashion idea, or share a special hint on makeup. Oh how empty the feeling when we cannot! The chapter should be a source of friends with whom we can share our innermost feminine thoughts.

In this way the chapters will provide an environment that will enable each member to grow in self image, express themselves safely, and develop and enhance personal relationships. This is how chapters do this:

1. Provide an atmosphere for members to express their femininity and to interact with others like themselves. How therapeutic it is to relate thoughts and ask certain questions without recrimination! Questions like "Why do my skirts always turn inside out in the dryer?" are important to discuss once in awhile.

2. Encourage each member to project as realistic a feminine image as she can. None of us want to be caricatures of women (and certainly our GF friends don't want us to be caricatures either). Although some of us will never make the grade, trying at least maintains the spirit and essence.

3. Provide a means for chapter socials such as dinners, teas, fashion shows, etc., to be enjoyed en femme. We should not forget that these events also help each member to develop and practice the skills of a hostess.

4. Provide opportunities such as dining out, shopping, coming together or visiting between local

chapters. These will provide for more safe exposure as well as broadening the circle of sisterhood.

5. Provide the opportunity to learn. One way is through discussions at meetings, where questions can be asked and evaluations sought. Another way is to provide educational seminars by experts. One of the main benefits of a group is supplying what the member cannot provide for herself.

6. Provide opportunities to experiment. Our GF's grew up with pajama parties, makeup sessions and fashion criticism. Why should we be different? Why not have members bring makeup mirrors to a session and experiment? Why not have sessions where different combinations of clothes are tried? At least by learning what is not right, we learn what is correct. Wigs are important to us. Why not style one in different ways, use bows, ribbons, etc., to see how they look, and get opinions of others? The GF's sought such help and they did all right.

7. Finally, the chapter should have as part of its networking a little information bulletin. This keeps all members informed as to what is going on and helps to bind the member to the chapter.

All a chapter can do is provide an opportunity. Every event must be subsidized by those attending. This means that collective funds of a chapter could be used as starter funds to get an individual event going. But those funds must be replaced by those attending the event to insure that there are sufficient funds for the expenses of operating the chapter such as mailings, publicity, etc. The chapter then is nothing more than a network of individuals who wish to explore their femininity in a more personal way. The chapter provides only what the members want it to provide. The members are the building blocks and the chapter is the result of their collective effort.

If a chapter is a network of individuals, then the National is a network for the chapters to do those things the individual chapters cannot do for themselves. What the National provides for its chapters is almost the same type of opportunity the chapters provide for their members. National is the collective effort of its chapters. The chapters are the building blocks of the National.

The National should:

1. Provide a network for the chapters to interact with each other, to exchange ideas and thoughts to better serve their members. The National has many experts distributed among the various chapters. The network would provide a means for that expertise to become available to all members.

2. Provide a repository for thought that can be utilized later. Some examples: "How do you put on a convention?" "How do you write a bulletin?" "What

events work and why?" Are we writing final reports on our various activities to guide others on what to do?

3. Provide educational opportunities that a single chapter could not. The Holiday En Femme is one. Or maybe even a regional convention of local chapters where folks such as Jim Bridges could be in attendance. (This should be relatively inexpensive for members as well.)

4. Provide access to experts for personal advice. Experts in this area are unfortunately few and often expensive. Maybe the National can have these experts appear at mini-conventions or during the Holiday En Femme.

5. Provide continuity for the individual chapters. The National, drawing upon the combined strength of its chapters, is much less subject to the cyclic periods of famine and feast that the chapters must endure. We would like to think that each of our chapters goes on forever. Unfortunately, such is not the case. Each is subject to shrinking and expansion over time. The National can provide support for the chapter at its nadir and the means to utilize the excess energy at the chapter apex.

6. Provide a periodical of activities of the chapters and other topics of interest, and perhaps some self help columns on various subjects.

7. Along with a regular periodical, a current and completely up-to-date membership roster ought to be produced. Supplements just do not suffice. It is much more professional and definitely easier to have only one upgraded roster rather than the many parts and pieces that seem to be the norm now.

I could provide a few more items that the National could do but I think it suffices to say that the National is a network of the chapters and is beholden to them. And accordingly, the chapter is a network of the members, and is beholden to them. Thus, the National is beholden to the members. If the National does not serve the members, it has no purpose.

Finally, I dislike the terms "open" and "closed". I prefer something that means "family" as opposed to "gender". I strongly believe in the "family" concept and so should Tri-Ess. I was told by an influential member of ETVC in San Francisco that it was through the couples' unit that ETVC got its impetus for the club's growth. I see the same growth for Tri-Ess National and its chapters so long as we remain "family" and embrace all that "family" embodies.

-Sheryl Ann Taylor CA-2500-T

SMILE

A CLINIC FOR BUTTERFLIES

BY
JAYE

The address isn't in a particularly fancy part of town. It's not in a run down area either. Butterfly Clinic is positioned right in the middle of the community. It's right there for the benefit of all. But lately there's been a growing sense of quiet and yet painful anguish.

You see, Butterfly Clinic didn't start out to be a Clinic or a repair shop. It didn't start out to be a half-way house or some sort of transition stop along the way for Butterflies. Somehow along the way, an awful lot of Butterflies have used it in this manner. Still it continues to be used as a healing place, a resting place in which newly emergent Butterflies can find safe haven, grow, and go on to greater and finer-seeming things as they migrate ever outward from our Clinic for Butterflies.

One day recently a group of the Doctors in Butterfly Clinic were sitting around in their grandest colorful displays commiserating about the way things seemed to be going. No one seemed to have a definite answer. Maybe it was "Southern Belle" in all her glowing colors who spoke first.

There was anguish in her voice. You see, she'd just recently been elevated to the lofty state of "Clinic Director" on an interim basis. Her concern was never-the-less plainly evident. She spoke of such things as declining numbers of Butterflies who stay with the Clinic any length of time after their initial introduction. She spoke of resource hemorrhaging. She spoke of the terrible strain of continuing services to those who only take and never contribute. She talked despairingly, but with a note of confidence, of leadership burnout. She smiled in her wan way and concluded we need to be something more than a Butterfly Clinic where newly emergent individuals pause briefly in their flight as they explore the world outside their cocoons.

She's right, you know. A limited number of people no matter how dedicated can last only so long when there is no infusion of new thinking, new energies, and new talent into a service and social organization.

Under the loving leadership of the new Clinic Director, let's see if we can't change the direction of the flow in the timeline life of Butterfly Clinic. No one has to stop being a Butterfly. Each has to pass through the 'damp wing' stage and needs a safe place to sit in the sun before flying this way and that to find what life is all about.

A sincere effort, under this new leadership, is being made to enlist the talents of an ever widening circle of Butterflies. Those working near or in one of the main centers of the Clinic are encouraged about this sense of new energy and new directions for the Clinic.

We cannot, however, desert our stated goal of being a safe place for 'wet winged' newly emergent Butterflies to find support and security. We have to remain committed to this goal. We have to remain sensitive to their special needs.

However, we don't have to forge an immovable anchor out of this commitment and focus our sight so myopically as to see only this narrow vision and ignore the wonderful experiences we can provide to so many by allowing them to share in serving the needs of others. Butterflies add beauty and enrich the whole of the environment. We need to encourage the richly talented newly emergent to feel comfortable with us and to be assured their profferings of energy and talent will be encouraged and lovingly accepted.

If you, dear reader, are a newly emergent Butterfly just out of the confines of the security of your shell, please take a moment to feel secure and know you are loved. Please, while you are with us, drying your wings and preparing for your flight into life in this new and beautiful way, pause to consider the talents and energies you bring with you. Consider too, the prospect of the unspeakable joy of helping other newly emergent Butterflies, and some of us who have been flapping around a long time but haven't really reached full maturity and beauty, to experience the wonders and beauties of free flight.

If you, dear reader, are not now involved in making Butterfly Clinic into what it can be; if you are merely a consumer of services and not a contributor to the enrichment of all Butterflies.... then we ask you, please, to consider what you have to offer and how by just being a consumer and never a contributor you are robbing all the other Butterflies of the added beauty and joy of life you have to offer.

Together, we can make a difference. We can contribute, not complain. We can cooperate, not conflict. We can give, not just take. We can be gentle, not harsh. We can be compassionate, not singularly self centered. We, not just the Clinic leadership, but all....can be something far more than we have yet been.
